



**DELHI UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY**

DELHI UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Cl. No. **0:6L782C**

GO.15

Ac. No. **104927**

Date of release for loan

This book should be returned on or before the date last stamped below. An overdue charge of 5 Paise will be collected for each day the book is kept overtime.

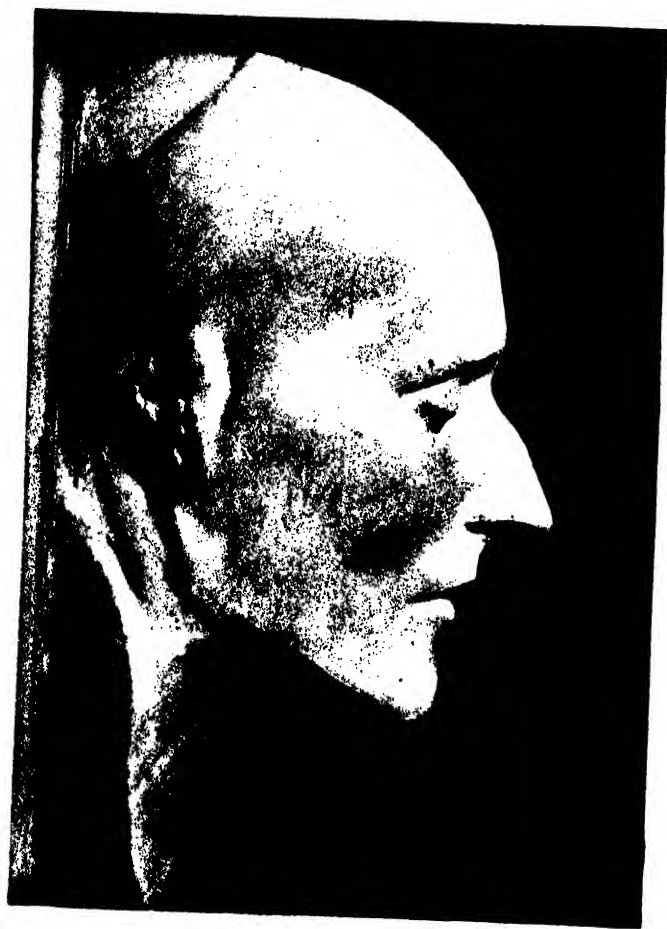
THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF WILLIAM HAZLITT IN
TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES

CENTENARY EDITION

Edited by
P. P. HOWE

VOLUME FIFTEEN .

THIS EDITION IS LIMITED TO
ONE THOUSAND SETS FOR
SALE IN ENGLAND AND THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



THE COMPLETE WORKS OF WILLIAM HAZLITT

EDITED BY P. P. HOWE

AFTER THE EDITION OF
A. R. WALLER AND ARNOLD GLOVER



VOLUME FIFTEEN

The Life of
Napoleon
Bonaparte
Volume Three



J. M. DENT AND SONS, LTD.
LONDON AND TORONTO

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED 1931

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN AT THE
CHAUCER PRESS, BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

CONTENTS

FRONTISPIECE

PAGE

*Death-mask of Napoleon, from the original in the possession
of Sir Archibald Weigall. (Photograph by "The Times.")*

CHAPTER XLII.

NAPOLÉON'S DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE AND MARRIAGE WITH MARIA-LOUISA	I
---	---

CHAPTER XLIII.

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA	14
----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED	37
--------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLV.

THE BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA	51
------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLVI.

BURNING OF MOSCOW	61
-----------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW	71
-----------------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SAME SUBJECT	88
----------------------------	----

CHAPTER XLIX.

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813	116
--------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER L.

THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIK	139
---------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER LI.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814	152
--------------------------------	-----

CONTENTS

CHAPTER LII.

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814 (CONCLUDED)

CHAPTER LIII.

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA AND RETURN FROM IT .

CHAPTER LIV.

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO OPENING THE CAMPAIGN . . .

CHAPTER I.V.

THE BATTLE OF LIGNY

CHAPTER I.VI.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

CHAPTER LVII.

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

CHAPTER I.VIII.

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

CHAPTER LIX.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

CHAPTER THE LAST

THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

APPENDIX

NOTES

THE LIFE OF NAPOLEON

CHAPTER XLII

NAPOLEON'S DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE AND MARRIAGE WITH MARIA-LOUISA

NAPOLEON on leaving Schönbrunn returned to France by way of Munich, where he waited for the ratification of the treaty by Austria. To convey the intelligence as soon as possible, military posts were placed on the heights at certain distances, who were to give the signal by white flags in the day and by bonfires kindled at night. The news of the ratification came the third day of the Emperor's stay at the capital of Bavaria. He set out next day for Fontainebleau, where he arrived a few hours before the Empress, who had left Strasburg for Paris a month before. There were marks of uneasiness on her countenance and an appearance of constraint in Napoleon's behaviour to her. She was alarmed at the circumstance of the private communication between her room and the Emperor's having been shut up. They returned to Paris on the 14th of November, where the presence of the King of Saxony sometimes relieved the awkwardness of a *tête-à-tête*; but it was easy to remark a considerable alteration in the features of the Empress and a silent reserve on the part of the Emperor.

The explanation took place on the 30th. Dinner had been served as usual. Josephine had on a large hat tied under the chin, which hid her face in part: but she seemed to have been weeping, and still had some difficulty to restrain her tears. She was the picture of grief. Neither party spoke during dinner, nor touched anything except for form's sake. Having asked what time it was, Napoleon rose and Josephine slowly followed him. Coffee was presented to him, and he made a sign to the attendants to retire. The chief of these (M. de Bausset) had hardly got into the outer room when all of a sudden he heard violent cries uttered by the Empress Josephine. Napoleon appearing at the door, said eagerly, 'Come in, Bausset, and close the door.' The Empress was stretched on the floor, venting the most

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

pitiable complaints and saying, 'No, I shall never survive it.' Napoleon then said—'Are you strong enough to lift up Josephine and convey her to her own apartment, where she may have the assistance and attentions which her situation requires?' The officer of the household did as he was desired; and taking up the Empress in his arms with Napoleon's assistance, the latter led the way with a lamp that he had snatched from a table, through a passage which opened on the private stair-case. Here M. de Bausset observing that he was afraid of falling with his load, the Emperor called to the Keeper of the Portfolio who stood night and day at the door of his cabinet, gave him the lamp, and himself took hold of Josephine's feet to enable his assistant to descend with greater safety. Josephine had breathed no complaint from the time she had been raised from the carpet in the drawing-room till she was placed on a sofa in her bedroom, she seemed to have fainted; but at one moment when descending the stair-case, she said to M. de Bausset, 'You hold me too tight'—and he then knew she was in no danger. As soon as assistance was procured, Napoleon withdrew into a small antechamber, where he manifested extreme agitation and distress of mind. In his anxiety he told the cause of what happened, and addressed his attendant in these words: 'The interest of France and of my dynasty has done a violence to my heart—the divorce has become an imperious duty upon me—I am so much the more hurt at the scene which Josephine has just exhibited, because three days ago she ought to have learnt from Hortense the melancholy obligation which condemns me to separate from her. I am grieved to the heart for her. I thought she had more firmness, and was not prepared for the excess of her sorrow.' In speaking thus, his emotion was so great as to compel him to pause between each sentence to take breath. His words escaped with difficulty, his voice faltered, and the tears came into his eyes. He then sent for Corvisart, her daughter Hortense, Cambacérès, and Fouché: and went back to see if Josephine had come to herself. The feeling of weakness that overcame her on hearing her fate from the mouth of Napoleon was the only one into which she was betrayed. She was at this time six-and-forty, though her unalterable good temper and the sweetness of her expression still kept alive the appearance of youth. The goodness of her heart and the graces of her person and manners diffused a sunshine on all around her. She never was known to refuse an act of kindness that was in her power, or to say a disobliging thing to any one. She descended from the height to which she had been raised with calmness and dignity; and retired into private life, regretted by every one, if that could be called private life where she continued to retain the rank and magnificence of an Empress-dowager.

DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE, &c.

Some pretend that she was more at her ease, and (with her habits and turn of mind) happier in her new situation at Malmaison than at the Thuilleries. But no one is really the happier for being deprived of advantages which flatter the imagination of the individual, and which others look up to with envy as the highest point of felicity. It is true, that while Empress she was often exposed to an infinity of petty formalities, and obliged to accommodate herself to the humours of persons she did not like. The Emperor's habits of business also frequently broke in upon the regularity of ordinary life. Before she could sit down to dinner, she had to wait for the Emperor, who deeply engaged in other matters forgot the hours. Once in particular he forgot the notice which had been given him till eleven o'clock at night; in coming out of his cabinet he said to Josephine, 'I believe it is rather late?' 'Past eleven,' she replied laughing. 'I thought I had dined,' said Napoleon, sitting down at the table. This sort of self-denial was a virtue which the Empress had often occasion to practise. Napoleon had some reason for saying, 'I only gain battles, while Josephine by her goodness gains all hearts.' Buonaparte in speaking of the two Empresses, used to call one the *Graces* and the other *Innocence*. Maria-Louisa did not much like him to visit Josephine after the divorce; and if she suspected him of intending it, had recourse to a number of little artifices to prevent it. Once when he proposed to take her with the young King of Rome to see Josephine, she burst into a flood of tears. The jealousy which she manifested on this score appears, however, to have been a mere weakness without any malice in it.

As soon as the intended divorce was made known, Josephine kept her apartments, and no longer appeared in public. *Madame Mère* (Napoleon's mother) did the honours. She was however obliged to be present when *Te Deum* was chaunted for the peace of Vienna (the consequence of which had been so melancholy to her) and also at the *fête* given on the same occasion by the city of Paris. On the sixteenth of December the project of the divorce was officially notified to the Senate; after which Josephine went to live at Malmaison, and Buonaparte retired for a few days to Trianon.¹ On his return to Paris, a council was held to consider of the most advantageous matrimonial alliance for France, and the majority of voices according to a supposed previous understanding, were for Austria. This determination however did not pass without opposition. The Austrian Ambassador, Prince Schwartzenburg, having been sounded, and a favourable answer given the same day,

¹ The civil marriage was dissolved in December, and the spiritual divorce was pronounced by the officiality of Paris on the 12th of January. For this last ceremony no absolute necessity appears to have existed, as the marriage itself had never been solemnized as a religious rite.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Count Lauriston and soon after the Prince of Neufchâtel were dispatched to Vienna to demand the hand of the Archduchess Maria-Louisa in marriage with the Emperor. The consent of the Emperor of Austria having been obtained and all the formalities gone through, the marriage was celebrated between the Archduchess and the Archduke Charles as proxy for the Emperor Napoleon on the 11th of March, 1810. She was to come to Braunau, a town situated on the frontiers of Austria and Bavaria, to be given in charge to persons appointed by the Emperor of the French; and here her ladies of honour and the French commissioner Berthier with a magnificent retinue were waiting to receive her. The ceremony actually took place at a short distance from the town in a temporary wooden building constructed for the occasion, divided into three compartments, the Austrian, the French, and a middle one, declared neutral. As soon as it was understood that the Empress had arrived at Altheim (a small town in the neighbourhood) on the morning of the 16th of March, the French escort instantly repaired to the place of meeting. The persons selected for this duty were the Queen of Naples (Caroline Buonaparte), the Duchess of Montebello, the Duchess of Bassano, the Countesses of Luçay, Montmorenci, Mortemart, and Bouillé, the Bishop of Metz, grand-almoner, the Count Beauharnais, chevalier of honour, the Prince Aldobrandini Borghese, first equerry. Counts d'Aubusson, Bearn, Angosse, and Barrol, chamberlains, Count Philip Segur, marshal of the palace, Barons Saluces and Audenard, equerries, Count Seyssel, master of the ceremony, and M. de Bausset, prefect of the palace.

The last-mentioned person, always ready and anxious to oblige and knowing the curiosity which would be felt (particularly by his fair country-women) to see their new and youthful sovereign before they were formally introduced to her, had bored a number of holes in the thin wooden partition that separated them from the Austrian court, through which they obtained a view of Maria-Louisa without her being aware of it. She was seen standing on the throne prepared for her; her person tall and graceful, her hair flaxen, her eyes blue, expressing all the openness and innocence of her character, and her whole visage breathing health and goodness of disposition. She had on a robe of gold-tissue, adorned with rich flowers, and wore round her neck a miniature-picture of Napoleon encircled with diamonds of immense value. She was surrounded by the highest persons of her court, ranged on her right and left according to their rank, and by the officers of the Hungarian Guard in their rich and handsome uniform. The ceremony of the transfer took place as it was dictated by Napoleon himself; and part of the document is worth transcribing as strikingly characteristic of a mind that could descend from the greatest to the smallest things

DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE, &c.

or occupy itself with both at once. It should seem that the incessant exertion of his mind, instead of fatiguing, only gave a fresh stimulus to its activity, and that the diversity of objects on which he employed his attention, so far from distracting, increased the comprehensiveness and clearness of his views.

‘ Arrangements for the reception of her Majesty the Empress at Braunau.

‘ The barrack or wooden building having been got ready as has been enjoined, her Majesty the Empress will arrive there at noon precisely.

‘ The lady of honour, the ladies in waiting, and all the retinue of her Majesty will leave Braunau, so as to arrive at the pavilion at half-past eleven.

‘ The commissioner of the Emperor and King, the Prince of Neufchâtel, will have arrived there at the same hour.

‘ Her Majesty the Queen of Naples shall be invited to repair to the pavilion at half-past eleven o’clock.

‘ All belonging to the French escort shall enter by the French avenue, and shall be arranged in the order pointed out by the master of the ceremonies.

‘ The equerry of the Empress shall come to an understanding with him in order to issue the proper orders.

‘ General Friant shall give orders for placing the sentinels outside and around the barriers encircling the pavilion ; in the Austrian division of which there should be admitted only what appertains to the Austrian service, and in the French division only what appertains to the French ; but no stranger.

‘ A superior officer shall be charged with the superintendence of the police, and there shall be small patrols stationed for this purpose.

‘ M. de Segur shall arrange with General Friant in such a manner as to have some one appointed to direct the approach of the Austrian escort by the Austrian avenue.

‘ The Empress on her arrival at the pavilion will alight at the door of the Austrian compartment.

‘ After her Majesty shall have rested a little, she shall proceed to the apartment intended for the ceremony of the transfer, followed by her Austrian retinue, and shall sit down in an armchair, surrounded by her ladies, the officers of her household, and having on her left the Austrian commissioner charged to transmit her.

‘ The master of the ceremonies of the Court of Vienna or the officer deputed to discharge his functions shall go in search of the French commissioner and the officers and dames named for the service of the Empress, who shall be assembled in the division declared French, and placed on the French side.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

'The Queen of Naples shall remain in the French division with the French retinue; she shall be seated in an arm-chair and surrounded by her household. She will continue in this apartment during the whole time of the ceremony of the transfer.

'The French commissioner and retinue will pass through the French door into the neutral compartment occupied by the Empress.

'The group shall pause after having entered the apartment.

'The French commissioner alone, accompanied by the Austrian and French masters of the ceremonies, shall advance towards the Empress, and after having made three reverences, shall address a complimentary speech to her Majesty, explaining the object of his mission.

'After her Majesty's reply, the Austrian master of the ceremonies shall point out to the French commissioner the Austrian commissioner; the two commissioners shall then salute and mutually compliment each other: the first compliment shall be paid by the Austrian commissioner.

'They will next proceed to the verification of their powers: the Austrian counsellor of state, discharging the functions of secretary, will read the powers of the Emperor of Austria to his commissioner; and the French counsellor of state, discharging the functions of secretary, will in like manner repeat those given by the Emperor of the French to his commissioner.'

The rest of the instructions relating to the reception of the Empress by the Queen of Naples and her ladies in waiting, and to the arrangement of the military, were in the same spirit and dictated by the same hand, and would leave one in wonder at the union of the most gigantic combinations and petty details in the same understanding (like the minute descriptions and grand effects in Richardson's novels) but that it seems as if the mind, the more it does, the more it can do, and that as by inaction it rusts and grows torpid, so the principle of activity in it is multiplied as it is called forth, without its being possible to assign the utmost limits of the human capacity.¹ Be this as it may, the ceremonial prescribed was complied with to the letter. The commissioners went through their parts with due courtesy and solemnity; the Prince of Neufchâtel introduced the Empress to the Queen of Naples, who took her by the hand and led her to her carriage, and they proceeded together to Braunau. Napoleon to show a sort of romantic

¹ All artificial memory is the memory of two things instead of one; and the more we know of any subject, the better we remember it, *i.e.* there are so many more links of association. The veracity of Napoleon's accounts of his battles is deducible from his knowledge of the circumstances. He would not say such a movement took place when he saw some obstacle staring him in the face which made it absurd or impossible. Liars have short memories and confused imaginations.

DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE, &c.

jealousy with regard to his Imperial bride, had given instructions to her chevalier of honour, the Count Beauharnais, not even to offer her his hand in ascending or descending a flight of steps. But this refined precaution was frustrated of its effect at the very outset ; for on taking leave at the pavilion, the whole Austrian escort from the highest to the lowest person of the train approached to kiss hands. Buonaparte may be supposed to have enjoined forbearance on his esquire with the same high-flown feeling of gallantry that makes Antony indignantly resent the idea that any one else should touch the hand of Cleopatra, 'her hand *my* playfellow !'

Having arrived at Braunau, the Empress took off her German dress and was habited in the French fashion from head to foot. She then received the oaths of fidelity from her attendants. She dined with the Queen of Naples and Madame Lazanski. After dinner she received the last farewell of the persons of her father's court who had followed her thus far to express their attachment and good wishes ; and the next day she set out for Munich. Here she was met by the Baron St. Aignan, equerry to the Emperor, who brought her a letter from Napoleon. At Munich she was obliged to part with the Countess Lazanski, who had been her governess, and to whom she was much attached. So many mischiefs had arisen from allowing their early advisers to accompany youthful princesses into foreign countries that the practice was given up as dangerous. From her first setting her foot on the soil of France, the Empress was hailed as the Aurora of a brighter day, of a new age of gold. At Strasburg she was met by a page of the Emperor's, who brought a letter, the choicest flowers of the season, and some pheasants of his own shooting. She here also for the first time gave an audience to a deputation of the local authorities, who were delighted with her affability. The cavalcade passed through Nancy, Vitry, Chalons, Rheims, and were to have stopped at Soissons for the night, according to a formula fairly penned and exactly setting down the interview for the morrow. But the impatience of Napoleon, who was grown as amorous as a boy of fifteen, disconcerted all his own fine schemes, and cut short the ceremony. The escort was ordered forward to Compiègne ; and Napoleon putting on his grey great-coat and stealing out of the park-gate with the King of Naples, hastened to meet his betrothed bride. He passed through Soissons ; and as the carriage in which Maria-Louisa was, drew up to change horses at the village of Courcelles, he flew to the coach-door, opened it himself, and the Queen of Naples saying, 'It is the Emperor,' he threw himself on the Empress's neck (who was unprepared for this abrupt and romantic meeting) and the carriage was ordered on with all speed to Compiègne, where it arrived at ten the same evening. The Empress breakfasted in her

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

chamber at noon the following day. The rejoicings and congratulations on her arrival were universal: the city of Paris made costly presents both to the Emperor and Empress; the procession at the public marriage passed from St. Cloud to the Thuilleries, and through the great gallery of the Louvre, which was lined on each side with a triple row of all that was most distinguished in France or nearly in Europe; and that no favourable augury might be wanting, Ferdinand himself is said at a banquet at the château of Valençay to have drank *To the health of Napoleon the Great and his august spouse Maria-Louisa!*¹ Soon after (on the 27th of April) the Emperor and Empress set out on a tour through the northern Departments to give the good city of Paris time to breathe. Dances, garlands of flowers, triumphal arches welcomed them all the way. On one of these last, at a small hamlet (to show how easily enthusiasm runs up into superstition) was inscribed in front, *Pater Noster*; and on the reverse side *Ave Maria, plena gratiâ!* The curate and mayor of so loyal and pious a village did not of course go empty-handed away.

On their return to Paris (1st of June) the rejoicings were renewed; and it was at this period that the dreadful accident by fire occurred at the entertainment given in celebration of the marriage by the Austrian ambassador, the Prince of Schwartzburg. The ground-floor of the ancient *Hôtel de Montesson* which he occupied in the Rue Chaussée-d'Antin was not large enough to hold all the company invited; so that he had a superb ball-room constructed of wood in the garden, with a gallery of the same materials leading to it. The ceilings of this gallery were covered with paper varnished and ornamented with paintings; the floors of both structures were made of planks raised on cross-timbers to the level of the rooms of the house, and an immense chandelier was suspended from the ceiling of the ball-room. Candles were also placed all along the walls of the gallery and ball-room. A box was reserved for the Imperial family in the centre of the ball-room and fronting the entrance from the gallery, and with a private door close to it for the use of the Emperor and Empress. The *fête* commenced with operadancing in the garden, which was seen to advantage by means of a splendid illumination: after which the company entered the ball-room, where the dancing had continued for about an hour, when a current of air agitating one of the curtains placed across the entrance of the wooden gallery, blew it against the candles, which had been fixed too near: the curtains caught fire, and in a moment the ceiling of the ball-room and the ornaments at the sides were in a blaze. Napoleon with the Empress extricated himself with ease from the danger by the

¹ The Cardinals alone absented themselves from the ceremony, and affected to throw a slur on the marriage, for which they were sent from Paris.

DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE, &c.

door which had been left behind his box. He made the carriages draw up, saw the Empress as far as the Place Louis XV. on her way to St. Cloud, and then returned to assist by his presence and counsels in extinguishing the flames. They had made considerable progress: soon after, the chandelier suspended from the ceiling of the ball-room fell with a tremendous crash; and in the hurry and fright, the crowd pressing towards the entrance stopped up the passage, and with their collected weight the floor gave way, and numberless victims were crushed to death or enveloped in the flames which burst out on all sides. The noise and confusion in the garden was dreadful, friends seeking friends, and the different members of a family calling in agony to one another. In a short time this temple of gaiety and enchantment was no more; nothing was left but blazing fragments and a melancholy stupor, when suddenly a young woman, handsome, elegantly dressed and covered with diamonds, rushed forward from the smoking rafters calling out for her children. The apparition vanished as soon as it was seen. It was the Princess of Schwartzburg, who perished thus miserably, while her young family were assembled in the garden and out of the reach of danger. Napoleon by his presence of mind and the directions he issued saved one or two lives. Among those who suffered most, but who escaped with their lives, was the Russian Prince Kourakin. Prince Schwartzburg was more affected than any one else by his loss, from the effects of which he never recovered. Then people began to recollect with alarm a similar accident that had taken place at the marriage of Louis XVI. then Dauphin, with Maria-Antoinette; nor was Napoleon himself quite free from these superstitious apprehensions. When some years after, Moreau was killed in the battle of Dresden, and there was a false report that it was Prince Schwartzburg, he remarked 'Then the omen pointed at him and not at me'—as if glad to shift the presage from himself.

A few days after this accident Louis Buonaparte, who wished to govern as King of Holland while his brother insisted on his considering himself a viceroy of France, gave up his throne, and went to live as a private individual in Switzerland and afterwards at Rome. Holland was in consequence united to the French Empire.¹

In the course of the autumn, the pregnancy of the Empress Maria-Louisa which had been for some time talked of was announced officially to the Senate. During the whole of the month of February, the Empress walked daily on the terrace in the garden of the Thuilleries

¹ A last attempt at negotiation with England had been just made by means of some Dutch agents, and failed through the impertinent interference and double diplomacy of Fouché, who set on foot another of his own, and thus rendered both suspected.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

which borders on the Seine ; and as she passed to and fro, was greeted by thousands who wished her well. These walks continued up to the last moment of her pregnancy. At length on the evening of the 19th of March, 1811, she felt the first pains of child-birth : the whole court and all the great officers of state were instantly summoned to the Thuilleries and waited with impatience the event. The labour was a very difficult one. During the whole time, Napoleon was in an apartment close by, from whence he went into the Empress's room every now and then. After she had been some hours in labour, Dubois, the *accoucheur*, came out to him while he was reclining on a sofa, with great alarm painted on his countenance, and said that ' the Empress was in a state of great danger, for that there was a wrong presentation.' He was asked if he had ever seen any thing of the kind before. He replied that ' he had, but very rarely, perhaps not one in a thousand, and that it was very distressing to him that so extraordinary a case should happen with the Empress.' ' Forget,' said Buonaparte, ' that she is Empress, and treat her as you would treat the wife of a little shop-keeper in the Rue St. Denis. This is the only favour I ask of you.' Dubois then asked, ' If it were necessary that one should be sacrificed, which he should save, the mother or the child ? ' ' The mother certainly,' was the answer—' it is her right.' The Emperor then accompanied Dubois to the bed-side, encouraged and tranquillised the Empress as much as he could, and held her in moments of the greatest agony. The child was apparently dead when born ; but by friction and other means it was restored to life. His birth produced a delirium of joy in the nation. On the discharge of the first gun that announced the expected event, all the population of Paris, in the greatest suspense, ran into the streets, the public walks, and the parks to count the number of guns. Twenty-one guns were to have been fired for the birth of a princess, and one hundred and one for a prince. At the discharge of the twenty-second gun, the Parisians rent the skies with acclamations and expressions of unbounded delight. Most of the powers of Europe sent ambassadors extraordinary to compliment Napoleon on the occasion. The Duke of Wurtzburg represented his brother the Emperor of Austria as god-father, and the Emperor Alexander sent his minister for the home-department to Paris to express his satisfaction.

Soon after the birth of young Napoleon, his father had it in contemplation to build a superb palace for him, nearly opposite the *Pont de Jena*, to be called *the Palace of the King of Rome*. The government accordingly endeavoured to purchase all the houses situated upon the ground, where it was intended to be built. Upon this spot, there was a small house belonging to a poor cooper of the name of Bonvivant, which including the ground on which it stood, was not at the highest

DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE, &c.

valuation worth more than a thousand francs. The owner demanded ten thousand. The matter was referred to the Emperor, who ordered that it should be purchased at that price. When the proper persons waited upon the cooper to conclude the bargain, he said that upon reflection he could not sell it for less than thirty thousand francs. It was referred again to Napoleon, who directed that the sum should be paid him. When they came to settle the business, the man increased his demand to forty thousand. The architect was greatly embarrassed, and did not know how to act, or in what manner he could again venture to annoy the Emperor on the subject: at the same time he knew it would be impossible to conceal the circumstance from him. He therefore addressed him again on the subject. 'This fellow,' said Napoleon, 'trifles with us; nevertheless there is no help for it; we must pay the money.' The architect returned to the cooper, who increased his price to fifty thousand francs. The Emperor was indignant when informed of it, and said, 'The man is a wretch, and I will not purchase the house at all: but it shall remain where it is as a monument of my respect for the laws.'¹

According to Napoleon's own account as stated in Mr. O'Meara's work, the match with Austria was the determination of the moment, and not the result of any prior arrangement. 'No sooner was it known,' are his words, 'that the interests of France had induced me to dissolve the ties of my marriage, than the greatest sovereigns of Europe intrigued for an alliance with me. As soon as the Emperor of Austria heard that a new marriage was in agitation, he sent for Count Narbonne, and expressed his surprise that his family had not been thought of. At this time an union with a Princess of Russia or of Saxony was contemplated. The cabinet of Vienna sent instructions on the subject to Prince Schwartzberg, who was ambassador at Paris. Dispatches were also received from the French ambassador in Russia, stating the willingness of the Emperor Alexander to offer his sister the Grand Duchess Anne. Some difficulties however presented themselves relative to the demand that a chapel for the Greek ritual should be established at the Thuilleries. A privy-council was held on the subject, and the votes of the majority were for an Austrian princess. I consequently authorized Prince Eugene to make an overture to Prince Schwartzberg; and articles of marriage, similar to those between Louis XVI. and Maria-Antoinette, were drawn up. The Emperor Alexander was not pleased that his overtures were slighted, and thought he had been deceived, and

¹ The Bourbons on their return razed the foundation of the intended palace, and threw down what had been erected: the cooper's hovel fell to ruins, and its master, M. Bonvivant, was living not long ago at Passy, where he earned an indifferent livelihood by his trade.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

that two negotiations had been carrying on at the same time, in which he was mistaken. It has been said,' added Napoleon, ' that the marriage with Maria-Louisa was one of the secret articles of the treaty of Vienna, which had taken place some months before : this is entirely false. There was no thought whatever of an alliance with Austria, previous to the dispatch from Narbonne, relating to hints which had been thrown out by the Emperor Francis and by Metternich. In fact, the marriage with Maria-Louisa was proposed in council, discussed, decided, and signed within twenty-four hours, which can be proved by many members of the council who are now in existence. Several were of opinion that I ought to have espoused a French woman ; and the arguments in favour of this were so strong as to incline me to balance for a moment. It was hinted however by the Court of Austria, that declining to choose a princess out of one of the reigning Houses of Europe would be a tacit declaration of an intention to overturn them, whenever the opportunity should present itself.'¹

Buonaparte's ambition to make his son King of Rome and to repair and restore that famous city to its ancient magnificence was in better taste and spirit than the project he entertained about this time to bring the Pope to Paris and make the latter the capital of the Christian world. 'To revive faded splendour and greatness is difficult enough ; but to transfer the associations and reverence belonging to a seat of classic renown by a mere *fiat* of the will or by the removal of what only remained to prove that the spell was gone, was impossible. It would be easier to transport the Seven Hills on which the queen of the world stood to the banks of the Seine, than to make people feel and think of Paris as they do of Rome. It was a fault in Buonaparte's mind that from the very intensity and activity of his will, he seemed disposed to regard every thing as matter of positive institution. But there were certain things placed beyond his reach. He could not create time ; nor, however he might establish a new era in the world, anticipate the effects of antiquity or superstitious awe a single day. What he might have made of Paris, there is no saying ; but he could not cause it to become ancient Rome. Besides, there is something in Paris that above all other places is essentially modern, ephemeral, and that refuses to blend in any shape

¹ In confirmation of the above account, M. Savary states that being one day at a court-circle, he was desired by the Emperor to point out any one of the ladies present who most resembled the Princess Ann Paulowna, who was at that time only sixteen years of age. The Empress-mother had scruples founded on stories in the English newspapers. The Emperor of Russia when he heard of the Austrian match, exclaimed emphatically, ' This condemns me to my native forests.' It is not at all likely that if his marriage with an Austrian princess had been already agreed upon, Napoleon would have risked offending Alexander by entering into a correspondence with him on the same subject.

DIVORCE FROM JOSEPHINE, &c.

with history or imagination.—With respect to Rome itself, whatever recollections hovered round it and might naturally produce a yearning that way, it could not be again what it had been ; because in order to be so, the world must again become what it had been in relation to it. Rome had attained its pre-eminence because the rest of the world was in a comparatively barbarous state ; and this perhaps was a fallacy that misled Buonaparte in calculating on the foundations of his own empire. France was not so far advanced in arts or arms as to be the natural mistress of the civilised world. Thus much however could have been done ; he could have made Rome a once more flourishing and noble city ; he could have drained (as he proposed) the Campagna, he could have preserved the old monuments, and raised up an Italian people as he had done an Italian army, out of the very dregs of sloth, of effeminacy, and superstition ; for these things it is in the power of man to do and to undo. All in fact that was desirable was practicable ; for glory and fame need not exist twice : the great masses of power and splendour are never lost sight of, and acquire grandeur by reflection and distance. Buonaparte by flattering the national vanity of the Parisians, had come in too great a degree to be the dupe of it, and seemed to have got a notion in his head that the whole universe was to be translated into French. The decree for removing the Holy See to the archbishopric of Paris was probably only issued in a fit of spleen, and was never acted upon. Buonaparte intended to have left France to the young Napoleon as his successor in the Empire, and to have made his second son (had he had one) King of Italy and Rome.

In the summer of the year in which the King of Rome was born (1811) the Emperor and Empress made a tour through the north of France ; and visited especially the ports of Antwerp and Cherbourg, where Buonaparte had projected and executed some of his most stupendous works. The basin at Cherbourg for the reception and shelter of a large fleet had been begun in the time of Louis XVI. but had been given up in despair. It was now brought to perfection after immense labour and expense. While here an accidental trait is recorded of him which paints his character in a trifling matter as strongly as in the greatest. After he had inspected the barracks and the artillery, and pointed a few of the guns, he had the bread of the garrison and the soup used by the soldiers brought to him to taste. He took a spoon, and filled it ; when the first thing he perceived was a long hair : he took it out boldly, and swallowed the soup, not wishing to hurt the pride of the soldiers around him by any remarks on their carelessness. To understand this, it must be observed that if the same thing had happened at his own table, he would have been forced to rise and leave the room, from his extreme aversion to any thing like a want of cleanliness. Such was his command

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

over himself and his attention to the feelings of others ! In the years 1811 and 1812 the war with Spain had gradually assumed a more serious and alarming character ; and the victories of Burgos, Badajoz, and Salamanca were gained by the allied Spanish and English armies. The Prince of Wales had been appointed Regent in the beginning of 1811, in consequence of his father's continued indisposition. Gustavus of Sweden, who had tried in vain to restore the age of chivalry in our time, had been driven from his throne ; and the Crown-Prince who was chosen to succeed him died suddenly while reviewing his troops in the spring of 1810. Bernadotte was invited to succeed him, and accepted the offer with Buonaparte's permission, though he did not much applaud a choice which afterwards proved so injurious to him. It was about the same time that Louis Buonaparte abdicated the throne of Holland from a squeamish refinement of character which does not care what mischiefs befall, so that it has no hand in them. Early in 1811 Count Czernicheff had been sent to Paris to ascertain the exact effective force of France, as Russia was already beginning to feel sore at the treaty of Tilsit. He obtained the information he wanted, and set off on his return home, just in time to prevent his being stopped by the police. Russia declared war against France in April 1812. Buonaparte's fatal expedition to Moscow took place in consequence shortly after : but that part of the subject claims a place by itself.

CHAPTER XLIII

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

LET a country be so situated as to be able to annoy others at pleasure, but to be itself inaccessible to attack ; let it be subject to a head who is governed entirely by his will and passions, and either deprived of or deaf to reason ; let it go to war with a neighbouring state wrongfully or for the worst of all possible causes, to overturn the independence of a nation and the liberties of mankind ; let it be defeated at first by the spirit and resentment kindled by a wanton and unprovoked attack, and by the sense of shame and irresolution occasioned by the weakness of its pretended motives and the baseness of its real ones ; let it however persevere and make a vow of lasting hatred and of war to extermination, listening only to disappointed pride and revenge, and relying on its own security ; let it join with others, influenced by similar counsels, but not exempted by their situation from suffering the consequences or paying the just and natural forfeit of disgrace, disaster, and mortification for

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

the wrong they had meant to inflict on truth and liberty ; let it still hold out, watching or making opportunities to bully, to wheedle, to stir up the passions or tempt the avarice of countries smarting under old wounds to engage in new wars for which they are not prepared, and of which they undergo all the punishment ; let it laugh at the flames that consume the vitals of other kingdoms, exult in the blood that is shed, and boast that it is the richer for all the money that it squanders ; let it after having exhausted itself in invectives against anarchy and licentiousness, and made a military chieftain necessary to suppress the very evils it had engendered, cry out against despotism and arbitrary sway ; let it (unsatisfied with calling to its aid all the fury of political prejudice and national hatred) proceed to blacken the character of the only person who can baffle its favourite projects, so that his name shall seem to taint the air and his existence to oppress the earth, and all this without the least foundation, by the means of a free press, and from the peculiar and almost exclusive pretensions of a whole people to morality and virtue ; let the deliberate and total disregard of truth and decency produce irritation and ill-blood ; let the repeated breach of treaties impose new and harder terms on kings who have no respect to their word, and nations who have no will of their own ; let the profligate contempt of the ordinary rules of warfare cause reprisals and give a handle to complain against injustice and foul play ; let the uselessness of all that had been done or that is possible to bring about a peace and disarm an unrelenting and unprincipled hostility lead to desperate and impracticable attempts—and the necessary consequence will be that the extreme wrong will assume the appearance of the extreme right ; nations groaning under the iron yoke of the victor, and forgetting that they were the aggressors, will only feel that they are the aggrieved party and will endeavour to shake off the humiliation at whatever cost ; subjects will make common cause with their rulers to remove the evils which the latter have brought upon them ; in the indiscriminate confusion, nations will be attacked that have given no sufficient or immediate provocation, and their resistance will be the signal for a general rising ; in the determination not to yield till all is lost, the war will be carried on to a distance and on a scale where success becomes more doubtful at every step, and reverses, from the prodigious extent of means employed, more disastrous and irretrievable ; and this without any other change in the object or principles of the war than a perseverance in iniquity and an utter defiance of consequences, the original wrong aggravated a thousand-fold shall turn to the seeming right—impending ruin to assured triumph—and marches to Paris and exterminating manifestos not only gain impunity and forgiveness, but be converted into religious processions, *Te Deums*, and solemn-breathing

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

strains for the deliverance of mankind. So much can be done by the wilful infatuation of one country and of one man !

The expedition to Moscow in 1812 arose out of the inability or disinclination of Alexander to keep the engagements he had entered into at Tilsit and Erfurt. Those stipulations might be hard and galling in their consequences ; but they were the penalty of defeat and the price of peace at the time. He had also accepted Finland as an equivalent, and had leave to march upon Turkey unmolested, which opened a different channel for his warlike preparations, if he felt a disposition that way. It was (to be sure) ridiculous to see fifty millions of people prevented from trading with England, because it interfered with the pleasure of a single individual : a prohibition, apparently so arbitrary and so strictly enforced, might be thought to reflect on the spirit and independence of the country, and certainly bore hard upon its interests. But England would not make peace with France, while she had any means left of carrying on war ; and there was no mode of compelling her to a course she abhorred (and the necessity had been acknowledged by Alexander himself) but by excluding her commerce entirely from the Continent. Whether she was right in assuming that attitude of bold defiance and interminable war, is another question ; but she by that virtually outlawed France, and Napoleon and his allies (such as he could make or find) only followed the example she had set, in adhering in their turn to the Continental System. It was however a hopeless case ; and it would have been better to have let go the only hold he had upon England than by continuing to grasp it (in spite of warning and every day's experience of its inefficiency and danger) to suffer himself to be dragged to the edge of a precipice. Alexander gave the first umbrage in not fulfilling the conditions of his treaties with Napoleon ; and by his want of frankness and candour, manifested no disposition to come to an explanation or good understanding. It was a sullen challenge, and Napoleon thought proper to accept it. Alexander doubtless began to feel that the other had no immediate claim to dictate a line of policy to any one with his influence and at the distance at which he was. This is true: neither would Buonaparte have had any pretext to do so, had he never come to seek him, and thus given his rival advantages and laid himself under obligations, not arising out of his natural position nor the real interests of his country. He had put it in Napoleon's power to give the law to him by making himself a party to the affairs of others : he had no consistent right therefore to cancel the obligations he had thus laid himself under by retiring upon his own resources, and saying that he was bound by none but Russian interests. He had come out of his fastnesses into the common arena, thinking to make a gallant figure and to throw Russia as a casting-weight into the

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

scale of European policy ; he had no right to say then, ' In Russia I am unassailable, I want nothing to do with your quarrels or disputes,' since in that case he ought to have staid there. To say nothing of the partition of Poland and the encroachments on Turkey, Russia had lately appropriated Finland, had thrice gone to crush France ; and yet Alexander talked of nothing but the honour of sovereigns and the desire of Russia to remain quiet. The fear that Buonaparte entertained of Russia was affected or chimerical as to practical purposes—her great strength was in the *vis inertiae* she opposed to foreign blows : his real motive was anger at not having been able to make her come into his schemes either by art of arms, and a determination to let Alexander see that what he had failed in by persuasion, he could make good by force. Still he was sensible of the immense difficulty and hazard of the undertaking ; made more careful inquiries, consulted more opinions, and hesitated longer than about any other of his enterprises. This very hesitation might have decided him against it : had there been dishonour or danger in the alternative, he could not have hesitated. In his situation, there were only two motives that should have induced him to undertake new plans, either absolute necessity or the certainty of success. In weighing the objections to the war, Buonaparte did not and would not allow the disproportioned odds, against which he contended. Had he entered the lists as a legitimate sovereign, as a *parchment* Emperor, he might have gone forth and had a tilting-bout with Alexander, either in the Niemen or the Don, in summer or winter, and returned as he came, not much the better or worse, with a battle lost or won, with more or less fame, with so much influence or territory added or taken off ; but in his case he never fought but for his existence. *His retreat was*, in technical language, *always cut off*. He should therefore have defied them to catch him at a disadvantage. He did not like to contemplate the lodged hatred and rankling hostility of which he was and must necessarily be the mark. His elevation prevented him from seeing the depth below : yet he trod upon a precipice where any false step was ruinous. The very extent of his power showed the precarious and ungrateful tenure by which he held it ; for he could only have attained it by a triumph over the last resources and efforts of his enemies. No ordinary objects of ambition or interest would have brought them to that pass : it was a deadly quarrel which made them risk their last stake before they would give in. But the principle remained unaltered ; and however coiled up in its dusky folds or severed into unsightly fragments, would re-unite and spring into action again with the first opportunity of revenge. That Buonaparte did not dwell on this view of the subject, was but natural : that he ever acted on the contrary one, was inexcusable.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

There was another general consideration which Napoleon overlooked : all that related to the statistics of the question he was perfectly master of, population, productions, number of towns, rivers, bridges, extent of country, &c. but it was trying an unknown ground, a new species of warfare. He knew what resistance civilization could make : did he know equally well what resistance barbarism could make ? It appears by the result—Not : and yet the burning of Moscow was in this undetermined order of events, to which his failure was properly owing. Notwithstanding the grasp and manly strength of his mind, the air of Paris had perhaps made him lay rather too much stress on artificial advantages ; but there is an extreme resource in the very dearth of resources, and a despotic power over mind and matter acquired by the very ignorance, poverty, and subjection of a people.¹ Buonaparte himself says that ‘ he had no more right to anticipate the burning of Moscow than he could be required to foretell an earthquake ; ’ and that is true, supposing that capital to have stood anywhere but where it did ; but there was something in the idea of its gilded domes rising out of barren boundless wildernesses that placed it out of the routine of ordinary calculation and might have prevented its being counted upon as substantial winter-quarters. These are the only points in which I think Buonaparte erred, in not weighing the consequences if he failed, and not considering the possibility that he might do so from the untrodden path he was about to enter. As to ordinary political or military calculations, I should suppose that he was completely justified ; that is, he was prepared to overcome all the obstacles of a kind to be foreseen ; and no one else (any more than himself) suspected his defeat till after it happened. It was a thunder-clap to friend and foe alike. Those who at present assert that the enterprise from the first contained the visible seeds of destruction within itself, and that Buonaparte had lost half his army by mismanagement and obstinacy before he had even reached the Russian frontier, will make few converts either to their judgment or veracity.

Buonaparte had taken care to secure the co-operation of Austria and Prussia, through whose territory he was to pass. Prussia was to send thirty thousand men into the field : and Schwartzenberg was to have the command of the Austrian contingent in Galicia. He had hoped also for the assistance of Turkey on his right, and of Sweden on his left ; in both which points he failed, though they were of less consequence. He had cultivated with considerable success and assiduity the friendship of the Sultan Selim, and there was a sort of political free-masonry in the correspondence between them : but after Selim’s death he had calculated little on the favourable disposition of his successor, while the

¹ Civilization gives hostages : barbarism has none.

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

battle of Friedland had led him to expect greater advantages from seconding the policy of the Emperor Alexander. A coolness between the two courts had ensued, till Buonaparte having come to a rupture with Alexander, sent to Mahmoud to offer him provinces, troops, and money, if he would immediately march to his aid against Russia with seventy thousand men. This abrupt and crude offer of friendship was declined; instead of which, the Turk concluded a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance with Russia on the 12th of May 1812, being alarmed at the representations of Buonaparte's increasing power, which it was said would soon threaten the shores of the Bosphorus. This disappointment was less severely felt than the defection of Bernadotte, who also signed a similar treaty with Alexander about the same time. This man was the creature of Buonaparte, and he turned against his benefactor; he was a Frenchman, and he turned against his country; he was chosen King of Sweden, and he leagued with Russia, its most dangerous rival and late despoiler; and all this, to gratify a private pique and the natural perverseness of his disposition. Bernadotte was one of those men who had been raised into public notice, 'drawn from the dregs of a democracy.' There are two extreme vices in political character; servility, which may be described as an abject submission to power whether right or wrong; and faction, which has its root in the envy and hatred of all power, with the same disregard of truth and justice.¹ This is the low-minded and self-destructive side of republicanism. It abhors all superiority whatever, not because it is unmerited, but the more for its being merited; it is jealous of all distinction, but doubly so of that which is founded on great ability and public service. It repays obligations with ingratitude, for the act of conferring them implies a painful sense of pre-eminence; and even generosity in forgiving a number of offences, as denoting excellence and virtue, is in its eyes a crime. While the loyal are heaping their idols with incense, these pretended patriots are decrying and pulling in pieces all who can take the lead or do any good on their own side of the question. They cannot bear the success of any thing, not even of their own cause; and they would sooner see it perish by the hands of men, whom they hate while they can despise, than prevail under the guidance of those whose triumph they ought to share, and whom they hate because they are compelled to admire them. This is one great reason of the failure of the popular cause, that it is clogged with so much of that love of freedom which is merely the envy of fortune, and that its most ardent partizans being actuated by the spirit of contradiction and a moody, captious, discontented humour, are dissatisfied with liberty itself as soon as it is attained, and fall out with their comrades and

¹ Independence or true patriotism lies between.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

leaders, even before they have got rid of their enemies. They are the proud-flesh and ill-humours of the state, whether in a monarchy or a republic. They screw up their professions of patriotism and independence to a romantic height in order to serve as a foil and be a stumbling-block in the way of practical good ; and if that will not serve the turn, run into the opposite extreme and make a traffic of their baseness and fickleness, rather than be baulked in their career of selfish vanity and low rancour. It was a scion of this set of men, who by their headstrong perversity and mutual antipathies tore the Revolution in pieces, that in the person of an upstart king gave it its death's-blow. Bernadotte had been one of the society of the *Manège* (a remnant of the most violent agitators among the Jacobins)—he had opposed Buonaparte's accession to power on pure republican principles ; he then tried to sow discord in the army : endeavoured to lose the battle of Auerstadt to dim the lustre of the French arms ; pretended he had won the battle of Wagram (claiming the merit he could not gainsay) ; he was then chosen Crown-Prince of Sweden, the electors thinking it would please Buonaparte ; he received a sum of money from him to enable him to go ; was full of acknowledgments till he had passed the frontier when he wrote a letter to disclaim all future obligation ; insisted on the neutrality of Sweden to favour the English monopoly of the sea ; sided with Russia to maintain the balance of power and the independence of nations, Norway being the bait and France the sacrifice ; and asserted the republicanism of the *Manège* by agreeing to restore the Bourbons, merely because they had never come into personal collision with him. And all this he was empowered to do with insolence and with impunity, because he had married a woman to whom Buonaparte had been attached and wished to gratify by making his god-son Oscar a prince. In such cases, his forbearance and security were wonderful ; and with all his fine-spun policy, his weakness when private friendship or family-connections were concerned, was that of a girl.—Buonaparte among his other ways and means had one resource open to him in the ardent and inextinguishable longing of the Poles for liberty (not unmixed with revenge) which he might have opposed with effect to the stubborn attachment of the Russians to their native soil and tyrannical masters. But of this he did not choose to avail himself, but stopt up its sluices, as he was not fond of giving a loose to those elements and movements of power, of which he could not calculate the extent or controul the direction. If he had ever intended seriously to encourage the zeal and patriotism of the Poles, he ought not to have sent the Abbé de Pradt as his ambassador to Warsaw, merely to amuse them with words. In making war on serfs, he should have raised up a nation of free men ; and instead of considering the liberation of Poland as the consequence,

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

have made it the instrument and the pledge of his success in Russia. But regrets are vain on this subject: were it to do over again, he would follow the same course. Even on his return from Elba, he would not lend himself to the popular ferment in his favour.

On the 9th of May, 1812, Napoleon quitted Paris to join the army. A scarcity with which France was threatened had kept him back for some weeks; as he would not stir from the capital till by incredible exertions and judicious precautions the danger had been averted. From Paris to Dresden his progress was a continued triumph. He was followed by the Empress and a numerous court. The eastern Departments through which he had to pass set no bounds to the demonstrations of their enthusiasm. This side of France, like all frontier countries, was always noted for its patriotism. This is not from what they gain but from what they have suffered by war. Buonaparte had thus far kept invasion at arm's-length. The distant provinces might grumble at their ease. But as long as he was successful, French patriotism was not local; for French vanity is not confined to the eastern Departments. In Germany, the feelings were no doubt different: still the inhabitants crowded to line the long route pursued by the Emperor, gazing at him who had so often vanquished them as a preternatural being. He had intimated a wish that the Emperor of Austria, several kings, and a great number of princes should meet him at Dresden. This wish was eagerly obeyed. The King of Prussia came uninvited, and though Buonaparte was by no means anxious to see him. The adulation was excessive and universal. He was the only object of attention; and every one else gave way before him. Seated in the palace of one of the capitals of Germany, surrounded by the descendants of her ancient kings, showing his imperial spouse, the daughter of the Cæsars, at his side, he seemed more like a monarch receiving his vassals than a soldier of fortune who had obtruded himself into the presence of kings. The population of whole cities had deserted their dwellings, and spent days and nights in gazing on the gates and windows of his palace or waiting in expectation of seeing him pass. Yet it was not his crown, his rank, or the luxury and splendour in which he lived that excited this intense curiosity and interest: it was the man himself; they wanted to stamp on their minds his figure and lineaments: they wanted to have it to say, that they had seen Napoleon.

Besides gratifying himself (which did not however go for much) the French Emperor had perhaps two objects in view in this display, to dazzle Alexander and conciliate the good-will of the sovereigns, in each of which he failed. Alexander only turned more averse from a pomp of which he was already jealous, and from a parade of friend-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

ship and alliance which he knew to be forced and hollow. As to the monarchs, it wounded their pride and ripped up instead of healing old wounds and recollections. They did not like to see themselves appear as ciphers before one who owed all to himself; or to be elbowed in his ante-chambers by his marshals and officers. Poets (ever flatterers of power) paid him divine honours at the theatres. Even their own subjects seemed ready to kneel down before him. They had then come to Dresden merely to heighten the splendour of Napoleon's triumph over them, for it was over them that he triumphed; every acclamation he received was a reproach to them; his grandeur was their abasement, his victories were their defeats. As to Napoleon himself, there must have been a lurking feeling of something theatrical and burlesque in these state-ceremonies and repeated rehearsals of etiquette: and as he did not enjoy them himself, he could not make others enjoy them. He liked either serious business or simple and familiar intercourse: he had no taste for artificial restraint and formal *nothings*. He however submitted to necessity, and did the honours with what grace he could. The Empress unwittingly had her share in exciting the heart-burnings, that were not kept a secret on this occasion. She eclipsed her step-mother (the Empress of Austria) in finery and jewels; and if Buonaparte endeavoured to check her, she resisted or wept. The Empress-mother, who was of the house of Este, had retained in her mind a deadly resentment of her family having been dispossessed of the Duchy of Modena by General Buonaparte; and let it escape her in unguarded starts and ebullitions of spleen. It was in this glass that Napoleon should have studied the figure he made in the eyes of princes and courtiers. Women, who are not implicated in political transactions nor perplexed with the pedantry of reasoning, are the true mirrors of all that relates to floating opinion or instinctive prejudice. This princess died in 1816; but she lived to taste the full gratification of her revenge; and to see the time when mines of jewels would not have extorted a smile or a sigh from the consort of an Emperor and a King, who was hurled from that elevation because he was his own Rodolph of Hapsburg, and not descended from the tyrants of some petty state in Italy!

In the mean time and while the columns of his armies were marching through the territories of his allies to the place of rendezvous, Napoleon directed Lauriston, the French ambassador at Petersburg, to apply for a definitive proposition to be sent to Wilna, and made General Narbonne repair to Alexander's head-quarters to assure that prince of the pacific disposition of France; and even (it is said) to invite him to come to Dresden. Lauriston was not listened to; and Narbonne on his return stated, that 'he had found the Russians neither depressed

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

nor boasting ; that the result of all the replies of the Emperor was that they preferred war to a disgraceful peace ; that they would take good care not to risk a battle with an adversary so formidable ; and finally, that they were determined to make every sacrifice to protract the war and drive back the invader.' Buonaparte received this reply at Dresden, where he remained till the 29th of May, when he proceeded to Posen, and from thence to Thorn, avoiding Warsaw where the war did not require his presence, and where he must have plunged into politics again. At Thorn he severely upbraided and even menaced his brother Jerome, on account of the complaints of the inhabitants against the exactions and insolence of the Westphalians ; though in consequence of the bustle and rapid movement of the troops, the natural effect of his interference was too often lost. Provisions, it is true, were supplied in abundance and with regularity all the way to the Niemen ; but the chief difficulty arose in respect to the more bulky articles of fodder, and the cavalry soldiers were sometimes obliged to mow the green corn or to strip the roofs of cottages of their thatch as food for their horses. Beyond the Niemen, the evil increased. Many of the provision-waggons broke down, and the carriages were too heavy for the sandy roads they had to pass. Provisions were therefore procured on the march ; horses, cattle, and food of every kind were seized upon ; and in the hurry and confusion of forced marches to overtake and overcome the Russians by a *coup-de-main*, there was no time to try or even to discover the guilty. Napoleon, however, did all he could to remedy the mischief and preserve discipline. Among the accusations brought against the troops he at one time distinguished with indignation the names of certain individuals of high rank ; he had the complaints against them inserted in the orders of the day ; and soon after seeing one of them at the head of his regiment, he angrily said, ' You disgrace yourself ; you give an example of pillage ; either forbear or go back to your father : I can dispense with your services.'

From Thorn Napoleon had descended the Vistula. Graudentz belonged to Prussia : he avoided passing through it, though he sent an artillery-officer under some trivial pretence to inspect it. At Marienburg he met Davoust, who had a violent quarrel in his presence with Berthier. Though Davoust had the best of the argument at the time, it turned to his detriment afterwards, as well as to that of the service, Buonaparte being prejudiced against him by the representations of those about him, and neither making use of his advice or assistance with the confidence they merited. His zeal was construed into officiousness, and his methodical and systematic preparations for carrying on the grand expedition into a desire to take the conduct of

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the war into his own hands. From Dantzic the Emperor proceeded on the 12th of June to Königsberg. Here terminated the inspection of his immense magazines and of the second resting-point or grand station of his line of operations. Here were collected stores of provisions, enormous as the enterprise for which they were designed. No detail had been neglected. The active and ardent mind of Napoleon was wholly intent on that most important and difficult part of the expedition. The day was swallowed up in dictating instructions on this subject; and at night he rose to repeat them. One general alone received in a single journey six dispatches from him, all expressive of his anxious vigilance. In one of these he says, 'The result of all my movements will be the concentration of four hundred thousand men upon one point: nothing can then be expected from the country; and consequently, we must carry every thing with us.'

From Königsberg to Gumbinnen, Napoleon passed in review several of his armies, talking to the men with gaiety, frankness, and a soldier-like bluntness. As his custom was, he walked leisurely along the ranks. He knew the wars in which every regiment had been engaged with him. He stopped for a few moments before some of the oldest soldiers; and to one he recalled the battle of the Pyramids, to another that of Marengo, Austerlitz, Jena, or Friedland by a single word, accompanied with the most familiar address. The veterans, thus recognised by their Emperor, felt elated before their junior comrades, who looked up to them with admiration and envy. Napoleon continued his round. He did not neglect the young: he showed an interest in all that concerned them, and was well acquainted with their smallest wants. He questioned them: 'Did their captains properly attend to them? Were they regularly paid? Was there any article they wanted? He should like to see their knapsacks.' He halted at length before the centre of the regiment. There he informed himself of the places that were vacant, and inquired aloud who were most worthy to fill them. He called before him those who were pointed out by their companions, and interrogated them as to their length of service; their campaigns; their wounds; their feats in arms. He then created them officers; and they were accordingly introduced as such in his presence, and in the manner which he prescribed. These individual attentions to the soldiers absolutely charmed them. They remarked to each other that their great Emperor, who decided on the fate of nations in a mass, descended in respect to themselves into the most minute particulars: that they were his old, his genuine family! It was thus that he attached them to war, to glory, and to himself.

The army now proceeded from the Vistula towards the Niemen.

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

That river, from Grodno as far as Kowno, flows parallel with the Vistula. The river Pregel runs from one to the other : it was covered with boats and provisions. Two hundred thousand men arrived there from four different points. They here found bread and a quantity of forage ; and these supplies, at first ascending the river with them, were afterwards forwarded to Wilna by land. The French were now close upon the Russian frontier. From the right to the left, or from south to north, the army was drawn up before the Niemen as follows : first, upon the extreme right and advancing out of Galicia upon Drogicsen was Prince Schwartzenberg, with thirty-four thousand Austrians : on his left coming from Warsaw and moving on Bialystock and Grodno, Jerome Buonaparte at the head of sixty-nine thousand Westphalians, Saxons, and Poles ; close to them, the Viceroy of Italy, who had just completed his junction at Marienpol and Pilony, with seventy-nine thousand Bavarians, Italians, and French : then the Emperor with two hundred thousand men, commanded by Murat, Davoust, and the Dukes of Dantzic, Istria, Reggio, and Elchingen. They came from Thorn, Marienwerder, and Elbing on the Vistula ; and on the 23rd of June were collected at Nogarisky, a league beyond Kowno. Finally, before 'Tilsit, at the mouth of the Niemen, Macdonald and thirty-two thousand five hundred Prussians, Bavarians, and Poles formed the extreme left of the Grand Army.

All was now ready. From the borders of the Guadalquivir and the Calabrian sea to the banks of the Vistula, above four hundred thousand men, six-bridge-equipments, one for siege, some thousands of provision-waggons, innumerable herds of oxen, thirteen hundred and sixty-two pieces of cannon, and thousands of artillery and hospital-waggons were now brought together and stationed within a few paces of the frontier-river of Russia. The provision-waggons alone experienced some delay. The army, of which not more than two-thirds were French, was in the best disposition and spirits. The old looked back with pride and confidence on the past ; the young with hope and curiosity to the future. All talked of what they had done or what they meant to do. The Poles who were mixed up with the army infused their patriotic feelings and their hatred of the Russians into it. Those who could, wished to be near Napoleon, where the chief action was ; and where what was done under his eye was immediately rewarded by his hand. The generals who had been accustomed to luxury and splendour, but who were compelled by him to live up to their incomes, were still for the most part dependent on him for fortune ; nor, however they might prefer ease, could they bear to be left behind in the race of glory. The great and general sensation, moreover, excited by the expedition was no slight attraction : its success

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

appeared certain ; they were going to carry their achievements and fame to the very confines of the civilised world. This one effort more, and all would be over. If was a last opportunity ; so that those who did not avail themselves of it would bitterly repent and listen with anguish to the glorious recitals that would be made of it by others. In short, the vastness of the enterprise ; the agitation of all Europe co-operating to accomplish it, or waiting the event ; the equipment and array of four hundred thousand infantry and eighty thousand cavalry ; the clash of arms, the trampling of horses, and the notes of martial music, the incessant warlike reports and military orders kindled even the veterans to enthusiasm. The most insensible could not escape its animating influence ; the contagion was universal. Napoleon was satisfied with the spirit manifested by the army, and addressed them as follows :—‘ Soldiers ! the second Polish war is begun. The first was terminated at Friedland and Tilsit. At Tilsit Russia swore to an eternal alliance with France and war against England. She has violated her oath ; she refuses to give an explanation of her singular conduct till the French eagles shall have repassed the Rhine, and consequently left our allies at her discretion. Russia is driven onwards by fatality ; her destinies are about to be accomplished. Does she believe we have degenerated ? Should we be no longer the soldiers of Austerlitz ? She has placed us between disgrace and war ; the choice cannot be for an instant doubtful ! Let us then march forward, cross the Niemen, and carry the war into her territories. The second Polish war will be glorious to the French arms like the first : but the peace which we shall conclude will carry its own guarantees with it, and will put an end to the fatal influence, which for the last fifty years Russia has had on the affairs of Europe.’ This address was appropriate enough in the circumstances : it was only belied by the event. Alexander also addressed a proclamation to his troops. The plea which he made use of would have been unanswerable, if he and Napoleon had met now for the first time : or if Russia never having passed and never intending to pass beyond her own limits, her soil *alone* became by this circumstance sacred and inviolable.

Volhynia, Lithuania, Courland, and Livonia were all favourable to the French, and expected their arrival with eagerness. Alexander kept these countries in awe with an army of three hundred thousand men. Alexander, and under him his Minister of War, Barclay de Tolly, directed the whole of these forces. The centre under Barclay extended from Kowno as far as Grodno : to the south of Grodno, Bagration had sixty-five thousand men near Wolkowisk ; and Wittgenstein twenty-six thousand to the north of Kowno, at Rossiana and Kedani. Besides this, Tormasof had an army of fifty thousand men in Volhynia to keep

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

Schwartzenberg in check, till Tchitchakoff should come up with the army of Moldavia, released by the treaty with the Turks: two other corps were formed at Bobruisk and Riga: the reserves were at Wilna and Swentziani, and there was a vast entrenched camp raised before Drissa on a bend of the Duna. Napoleon thought that this position of the Russians behind the Niemen was neither good for attack nor defence; that it was extended over too large a space; that the marshes of the Berezina behind Bagration cut off his retreat; and by advancing in full force upon Kowno and Wilna, he could drive back and separate Alexander from his two wings, and by a sudden turn to the right, surround and take the whole left of their army prisoners. While the Emperor was preparing to carry this movement into effect, Schwartzenberg at first defeated Tormasof; but after the arrival of the second Russian army from Bucharest, did nothing more, acting supinely, and as there is reason to believe, with bad faith, during the rest of the campaign; while Macdonald in the north maintained the war with vigour and judgment, though without any decisive results, and was at last obliged to retreat not by the enemy, but by the Emperor's orders.

Between these two extreme points, the Grand Army marched towards the Niemen, in three separate masses. The King of Westphalia with eighty thousand men took the direction of Grodno; the Viceroy with seventy-five thousand, that of Pilyony between Grodno and Kowno; the Emperor with two hundred thousand men, that of Nogarisky, a farm situated beyond Kowno. On the 23rd of June, before day, the Imperial columns approached the Niemen, though the borders of the great Prussian forest of Pilwisky and the hilly ground that lines the river prevented them from seeing it. Napoleon mounted on horseback and went to reconnoitre the situation to find a passage over. When he had nearly reached the river, his horse fell, and threw him on the sand. 'That,' said one present, 'is a bad omen: a Roman would go back!' Having examined the ground, he ordered three bridges to be thrown across the river the same evening near the village of Ponien; and went and passed the rest of the day in his tent, motionless and oppressed with the heat, which at this time was excessive. The first that crossed the river were some sappers in a skiff. They landed on the Russian side, without meeting any impediment or seeing any one but a single Cossack, who after the exchange of a few questions, withdrew into a wood, into which three of the French soldiers discharged their pieces after him. No other sound announced the new war and the invasion of a vast empire. Three hundred *voltigeurs* immediately crossed the river to protect the establishment of the bridges. Then all the French columns passed to the river-side, in perfect silence and under cover of the darkness. All fires were forbidden; and they lay down to sleep with their

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

arms in their hands. The green corn, wet with the dew, served as a bed for the men and as food for their horses. During the night, they repeated passages of the Emperor's proclamation which had just been read. As the day dawned, they looked towards the country they were about to enter, but saw only a dry and sandy plain and dark forests. About three hundred paces from the river, on a rising ground, was the Emperor's tent; around it the tops and sides of the hills and the intervening valleys were completely covered with men and horses. As soon as the sun had risen upon these moveable masses glittering in arms, the signal was given; and they all set forward in three columns towards the bridges. Two divisions of the advanced-guard, while contending for the precedence in passing over, nearly came to blows, and were separated with difficulty. Napoleon took his stand near one of the bridges, surveying the men with looks of encouragement as they passed. But at length he grew impatient, and darted off at full gallop into the country as if eager to find an enemy. He returned and proceeded with the guard to Kowno. A violent storm soon after came on, and a distressing accident happened in the course of the day. The Cossacks having broken down the bridge over the Vilia, where Oudinot was to pass, Buonaparte ordered a squadron of Poles of the Guard to throw themselves into it and swim it. This they did at first without difficulty; but coming into the middle of the stream, they were disunited and carried away by its violence. Some of them struggled to save themselves in vain; but in the very moment of sinking, they turned their last looks towards Napoleon, and cried, 'Long live the Emperor!' The army looked on with admiration and terror. Napoleon, suppressing his emotion, gave every necessary order, so as to save the greater number. A bridge was shortly after thrown across, over which Oudinot and the second corps marched towards Kedani. It took the rest of the army three entire days to pass the Niemen.

From Kowno Napoleon arrived in two days at the defiles defending the plain of Wilna. He hoped that Alexander would have waited for him here; but information was brought that the city was evacuated. He moved forward to it, not well-pleased, complaining that the generals of the advanced guard had suffered the Russian army to escape. The same day, a number of hussars of the 8th having pushed on too rapidly were cut to pieces by the Russian guard that had been concealed in a wood. The enemy was in full retreat to Drissa. Murat was made to follow the track of Alexander, while Ney was sent to support Oudinot, who attacked and drove back Wittgenstein on the left as far as Wilkomir. The Emperor returned to Wilna, which he had hastily hurried through, where his unfolded maps, military reports, and a crowd of officers awaited his arrival. He threw himself on a bed, as if fatigued, but in

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

reality to meditate ; and soon after starting up, dictated all the requisite orders. He received accounts from Warsaw and the Austrian army. The address at the opening of the Diet displeased him. ' It is French, it ought to have been Polish.' He was also assured that of the whole Austrian army he could depend only on their leader : this he thought sufficient.

The French were welcomed as deliverers in Lithuania. Everywhere the same sentiments were observable ; in the interior of houses, at the windows, and in the public places. The inhabitants stopped to congratulate and embrace one another in the streets and on the roads : the aged reappeared, clothed in the ancient costume, which recalled ideas of glory and independence. They wept for joy at sight of the national banners which had just been unfurled ; and which were followed by an immense multitude, rending the air with acclamations. The Diet of Warsaw had shown great spirit ; it had formed itself into a general confederation ; declared the kingdom of Poland to be re-established ; required all Poles in the Russian service to return home ; appointed a representative of itself in a general council, and presented an address to Napoleon at Wilna, in which he was called upon to pronounce the sentence, '*Let the kingdom of Poland be,*' and it would be ! Napoleon, it must be granted, did not do much to fan this rising flame into a conflagration, but a good deal to damp it. He gave them, however, his good word and good wishes, pleaded his engagements to Austria, recommended unanimity, said they must do all for themselves ; and accordingly they did nothing either for themselves or him. They had looked upon him as the arbiter of the world, and they found him talking like a diplomatist. His situation was embarrassing enough : but when he chose, he knew how to cut the Gordian knot of policy with his sword. He could irritate a people by cheating them of a government to which they were stupidly attached : why not make the *amende honorable* by relieving a people of a yoke to which they were naturally averse ? He had made war upon Russia chiefly to erect Poland into a barrier against that power : how then could he pretend that the liberation of Poland might be a bar to his making peace with Alexander ? If he had come all this way to fight him as a piece of gladiatorship, the object was not worth the cost and trouble. But if Napoleon did not second the enthusiasm of the Poles at this time, he was too just and too proud to reproach them with the want of it afterwards.

The exactions and excesses of the army did not tend to increase the cordiality of the natives. In Prussia, the Emperor had ordered the troops to take with them provisions to last twenty days, that is, till they reached Wilna. Victory would effect the rest. But the flight of the enemy postponed that victory. Yet having overtaken and disunited

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the Russians, he did not like to forego this advantage. Dantzic alone contained grain enough to supply the whole army. The supplies were intended to be forwarded by the Vilia, which the drying up of that river prevented. The convoys at length arrived by land at Wilna, but not till after the army had left it. It was the centre-column that endured most hardship : they followed in the track which the Russians had already laid waste. Not only the inhabitants, but the army therefore suffered severely on its march. On its being represented to Napoleon that many soldiers even of the Guard had died of hunger, he exclaimed, 'It was impossible : soldiers well-offered could never die of hunger !' He was then told that the men had not died from hunger but intoxication. 'We must bear,' he said, 'the loss of a few horses and a few equipments, and even the destruction of a few habitations ; it is the unfavourable aspect of war : misfortune must have its share in every thing ; my riches and benefits will repair any losses ; one grand result will compensate for all ; I only want one victory : if I have enough left to obtain that, it is everything.'

In this state of things, Balachoff (a Russian flag of truce) presented himself, bringing a verbal message from Alexander, that 'there was yet time to treat from one bank of the Niemen to the other ;' but as he was charged with no specific proposals, and as his character excited some suspicion, being the minister of police, he was dismissed without any satisfactory result. On this occasion Buonaparte is said not to have been sparing of his sarcasms. He observed that 'Alexander was a mere parade-general,' and accused Caulaincourt (it is supposed with a view of making him a more welcome messenger to Alexander at some future time) of being 'a Russian in the French camp.' But a number of things are put into Buonaparte's mouth in the current reports, to which he perhaps would not have pleaded guilty. There is even in the best French accounts so much *ex-post-facto* criticism mixed up with the history, such a desire to make up for the failure of the enterprise by a premature sagacity in foreseeing it, such an air of nervous apprehension thrown over its very outset, such a disposition to find or to insinuate faults in the execution of the plan rather than in the plan itself, to throw the blame on the individual as a salvo for the national vanity, that we cannot be too much on our guard in determining what to believe or what to reject, whenever this bias may be supposed to come into play.

Meantime, Murat was attempting to obtain that victory so much desired : he commanded the cavalry of the advanced-guard ; and having come up with the enemy on the road to Swentziani, drove them before him towards Druia. Every morning the Russian rear-guard seemed to have escaped him ; every evening, he discovered it again, but too late for an attack. On the 15th of July, the Duna had been

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

reached at different points by Murat, Montbrun, Sebastiani, and Nansouty, by Oudinot and Ney, and by three divisions of the first corps which had been placed under the command of Count Lobau. Oudinot made a feeble attempt upon Dunabourg : Wittgenstein retreating from it towards Drissa surprised and overthrew a division of French cavalry at Druia, taking most of them prisoners. This *coup-de-main* gave Napoleon hopes that Barclay was assuming the offensive ; and he suspended his march upon Witepsk in order to be ready for battle. Thus far his plan had been completely successful. In breaking the enemy's line by a violent attack on a single part he had repulsed and driven the largest mass of his forces under Barclay upon the Duna, while Bagration, against whom he had directed no attack till five days later, was still left behind upon the Niemen. Already Davoust at Osmiana to the south of Wilna had observed some of his scouts, who were anxiously seeking for an outlet to the north. Measures were taken accordingly. Davoust on the 8th had stationed himself in advance of the Russian general towards Minsk and Vigumen, while the King of Westphalia received orders to press upon his rear and compel him to involve himself in the defiles or long narrow causeways over the marshes of the Berezina, which constituted his only retreat. He accordingly presented himself at the outlets, first at Lida and then at Minsk, but found Davoust there before him. On receiving this intelligence and finding Bagration with forty thousand Russians cut off from his communication with Alexander, and enclosed by two rivers and two armies, Napoleon exclaimed, ' I have them ! ' In fact, the Russian general was completely entangled, had Jerome Buonaparte behaved as he ought to have done. But while Davoust was waiting for him to drive the Russians into the snare prepared for them, that young prince, who had been put under Davoust's orders, disdaining to serve under a subject, had flung up his command and retired in disgust into Westphalia, without (as it is said) even forwarding the instructions he had received. Thus perhaps by entrusting power in the hands of family-connections was all reversed that had been done or attempted by taking it out of them and giving it to *the most worthy* ! Bagration not being closely pressed by the Westphalians, turned farther south, passed the Berezina at Bobruisk and reached the Boristhenes at Mohilef. Here the two generals again stumbled upon each other by chance. Bagration had at this time thirty-five thousand men ; Davoust only twelve thousand with him. The latter however determined to intercept his progress ; and placing himself on a narrow height between two woods with a ravine before it, gave battle to the Russian commander and defeated him with great loss. The Russians excused themselves by saying they believed Napoleon had been there in person ; his fame thus multiplying his influence all round

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

him, for Barclay fancied he was before him at Drissa, while Bagration thought he was at Mohilef. The latter retreating once more, passed the Boristhenes at Novoi-Bichof, where he at length united with Barclay beyond Smolensk.

Napoleon disappointed at the failure of his plan attributed it to his not being able to be present everywhere. The circle of his operations was so greatly enlarged, that while compelled to remain in the centre, he was wanted everywhere at the circumference. He had been twenty days at Wilna, waiting the result of his different combinations. He now, therefore, prepared to set forward, having first appointed Maret (Duke of Bassano) to the government of Lithuania and to be the medium of his communication with the army and France, and published a sort of manifesto against Russia in the following terms:—‘Behold then this same empire of Russia at a distance so formidable ! It is a desert, of which the scattered hordes are not sufficient for its protection ; they will be conquered by that very extent, which ought to be their safeguard. They are barbarians. They scarcely even have arms. They have no recruits in readiness. It would require more time to collect them than we should take to go to Moscow. It is true that since the passage of the Niemen, the unsheltered and unsheltering waste has been either inundated or parched up ; but such calamities are less an obstacle to the rapidity of our invasion than an impediment to the Russians in their flight. They are conquered without battles by their own mere weakness, by the remembrance of our victories, and by the pangs of remorse which urge them to restore that Lithuania, which they obtained neither by peace nor war, but by perfidy alone.’ The army being united, and a battle requiring him in the field, Napoleon left Wilna on the 16th of July, stopped the next day at Swentziani during the heat of the day, and on the 18th arrived at Klubokoe. He then took up his abode in a monastery, from which the small town immediately under it appeared to him more like a collection of the huts of savages than the habitations of civilised Europeans.

An address from the Russians to the French had just been circulated in the army. It contained a good deal of abuse, accompanied with an invitation to desertion. The Emperor was irritated on reading it, and dictated a reply, which however he immediately tore to pieces ; he dictated a second, which underwent the same fate ; and at last a third, with which he was satisfied. This was the paper which was published at the time in the journals under the signature of a *French Grenadier*. While he was engaged about this answer, he was apprised that on the 18th Barclay de Tolly had abandoned his camp at Drissa and was marching towards Witepsk. He immediately ordered all his corps upon Beszenkowiczi ; he ordered Murat and Ney to that place from the

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

neighbourhood of Polotsk, where they then were, and where Oudinot was left. He himself proceeded from Klubokoe, where he had been surrounded by his Guard, the army of Italy, and the divisions detached from Davoust to Kamen. Thus far the greater part of the army had gone on marching in astonishment at not finding any enemies. They appeared in many instances less like an army of warriors than like men pursuing a comfortless and unprofitable journey. But if war and the enemy should thus continue to fly before them like the horizon, how far should they advance in the pursuit? At length on the 25th a cannonading was heard; and the army as well as their leader hoped for a battle, a victory, and peace. The sound came from the quarter of Beszenkowicsi. Prince Eugene had just had an encounter with Doctorof, who commanded the rear-guard of Barclay. He had cleared the passage of the Duna and burnt the bridge, which the Viceroy had repaired. Napoleon hastened to the spot, and passed over the bridge to ascertain what progress the Russian army had made, and whether he could overtake it before it reached Witepsk. But being soon convinced that Barclay had outstripped him, he returned to Beszenkowicsi, where his armies now arrived at the same moment by the north and west roads. His orders of march had been so clearly laid down and were executed with such perfect precision, that all these corps, after leaving the Niemen at different periods and by different routes, notwithstanding every species of impediment, after a month's absence and after traversing a hundred leagues from the time of their departure, were all re-assembled at Beszenkowicsi, which they reached on the same day and at the same hour. In consequence, the greatest confusion now prevailed in that place: but before midnight, all these masses which had appeared inextricably intermingled gradually cleared away: the vast collection of troops flowed off towards Ostrowno, or was absorbed in Beszenkowicsi; and the most frightful tumult was succeeded by the profoundest calm.

Every thing announced a battle on the ensuing day. Napoleon, not having been able to gain Witepsk before the Russians, was determined to expel them from it; after entering it by the right bank of the Duna, they had passed through the city, and presented themselves in front to defend the long defiles by which it is covered. Murat had marched on with his cavalry the day before (the 26th July) towards Ostrowno. At the distance of two leagues from that village, the 8th hussars were advancing in column on a wide road, bordered by a double row of large birch-trees. They thought they had been preceded by two other regiments of their division who were to pass along the fields, but whom they had in fact left behind; and seeing only a part of three regiments of cavalry of the Russian guard at the top of a hill before them, they

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

marched on with the utmost confidence, not suspecting much resistance. Presently an officer whom they sent forward to reconnoitre was cut down, and six pieces of cannon began to play upon them. They lost no time in deliberating, but darted between the trees and ran forward to extinguish the fire. They seized the guns; and in the impetuosity of their attack, repulsed the centre regiment of cavalry which was stationed on the high road. They now perceived the two other regiments; attacked and overthrew that on the right; and before the one on the left could effect its retreat, fell upon it and were the third time vanquishers.

Murat inflated by this exploit pushed into the woods of Ostrowno in search of an enemy. He soon found one. The ground hastily won by the 8th hussars was now fiercely contested with himself; and his advance-column composed of the divisions Bruyeres and St. Germain and the 8th regiment of infantry had to defend themselves against superior numbers under the Russian General Ostermann; but after an obstinate engagement, the division Delzons coming up to their assistance, the victory was with the King, who led on the attack now and hazarded his life with the same dauntless bravery as when he had been a private in the ranks. That same evening, the Viceroy rejoined Murat, and the following day saw the Russians in a new position. Pahlen and Konownitzin had united with Ostermann. While the two French princes were consulting how they should commence the attack with their right wing, they heard an immense clamour on their left, and saw their own men repulsed by the Russians who were issuing with the utmost intrepidity and in large masses, out of the woods whence those deafening war-cries had first been heard. A battalion of Croats and the 84th regiment in vain attempted to stem the torrent; the ranks were broken; the ground in front was covered with the slain, that behind with the wounded or those who were glad of the excuse for leading them off; the artillery-men, not seeing themselves relieved, were retiring with their cannon, and the confusion was becoming general and irretrievable. At this moment Murat in a state of violent agitation placed himself at the head of a regiment of Polish lancers, and rushed headlong on the enemy. Murat's object had been at first merely to excite and animate them to the combat, but the lances of the Poles were in their rests, and closely filed behind him; they occupied the whole width of the road, they pushed him on with the utmost speed of their horses, and he was absolutely compelled to charge with the regiment before which he had placed himself merely to harangue it. General Anthouard running forward to his cannons, and General Girardin rallying the 10th regiment, seconded by General Piré, they retrieved the fortune of the day, and the Russians fell back upon their forests. One division alone still

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

occupied a thick wood in advance, which was carried by General Belliard. At this point of time the Emperor came up. The Viceroy and Murat hastened to inform him of what had happened, and to consult him on the propriety of proceeding. Napoleon instantly ascended the highest point of ground in the neighbourhood; and having reconnoitred the forest which lay before them, and which had presented so formidable an aspect to the two victorious princes, gave orders for advancing; and that same evening, Witepsk from her double hill might see the French riflemen debouching into the plain by which it is surrounded. Here every thing made it necessary to halt. Napoleon slept in his tent on a spot of rising ground to the left of the road and behind the village of Kukowiactsi.

On the 27th the Emperor appeared at the advanced posts before sunrise. Its earliest rays discovered the Russian army encamped on an elevated plain, which commanded all the avenues of Witepsk. The river Luczissa, flowing in a channel of extraordinary depth, marked the foot of this position. In front of it, ten thousand cavalry and a body of infantry showed an apparent intention of defending its approaches: the infantry was in the centre on the high road; the left on woody eminences; and the whole of the cavalry on the right, in double line, supported by the Duna. Buonaparte was on a small hill from whence he could survey both armies. The front of the Russians was no longer directly opposed to the French, but inclined with a bend in the river, so that it was necessary for the latter to effect a change in their position in order to face them. The first who advanced were two hundred Parisian *voltigeurs*, belonging to the 9th regiment: the 16th of horse-chasseurs came next, with some pieces of artillery: the Russians merely looked on. The King of Naples, intoxicated with the view of such an assemblage of spectators, could not restrain himself, but precipitated the chasseurs of the 16th on the whole of the Russian cavalry. They were driven back, and cut almost to pieces. Murat, stung to madness at perceiving the result, threw himself sword in hand into the very midst of the rout and confusion, with the sixty officers and cavalry that he had about him. The mere audacity of the attack disconcerted the Russian lancers, who halted. The remains of the 16th rallied and were joined by the 53rd regiment. The successful charge of the Russian lancers had brought them near the foot of the hill, where Napoleon was giving directions. Some of the chasseurs of the French guard dismounted according to custom to form a circle round him; and by discharging their carbines drove back the lancers, who on their return fell in with the two hundred Parisian *voltigeurs* who had been left alone between the two armies. Every body gave them up for lost. But though alone, they themselves had no feeling of despair. Their commander led them,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

desperately fighting all the way, to a spot of ground interspersed with thickets and deep gaps, which bordered on the Duna. Here they formed in an instant with that quick sense, which habit and danger together inspired. The Russian lancers embarrassed by the brambles and brush-wood and impeded by the many refts and openings in the ground, could not act to advantage; and while they were endeavouring to surmount these obstacles, they were struck with the French bullets, and fell wounded to the earth; their own and their horses' bodies encumbering the field still more. At length they were repulsed; the flight of their enemies, the applauding shouts of the French army, the insignia of the Legion of Honour which the Emperor on the instant dispatched to the bravest, the words he used on the occasion, which were afterwards read by all Europe, every thing served to complete the satisfaction of the men at the danger they had escaped and the glory they had just achieved. After another sharp action the Russians withdrew behind the Luczissa, and united on the opposite bank, presenting a force of eighty thousand men.

Their assured aspect and strong position in front of a capital, made Napoleon believe they meant to give battle here; and this was in fact their intention. He put an end to the attack, though it was only eleven in the forenoon, to prepare for the next day. He breakfasted on a hillock among the riflemen; while surveying the ground, a ball hit one of the persons in his suite. On taking leave of Murat, he said, 'Tomorrow at five you will see the sun of Austerlitz!' Murat had no faith in the prediction, to which indeed the event did not answer, though the Russian general, believing Bagration near Orcha, had resolved to give battle, and his determination was changed solely in consequence of his receiving in the course of the night intelligence of the retreat of Bagration towards Smolensk. Still perhaps Buonaparte was to blame in leaving any opening for such a change of purpose, and there was a time when he would have taken opportunity by the forelock. There is no doubt that an accumulation of adventitious honours and distinctions, like a weight of golden armour, clogs the mind and presses on the nerve of action; and they are therefore fittest for those who have nothing to do either to gain or keep them. Even fame itself in a manner suspends the aspirations after excellence; and it is therefore an advantage rather than a subject of complaint that it is generally posthumous! On the 28th at day-break, Murat sent to inform the Emperor that he was going in pursuit of the Russians, who were no longer within sight. Napoleon would not at first credit the report; but their empty camp soon convinced him of its truth. Every thing in this camp bore testimony to the commander's science in war; nothing had been left behind, nor was there the least trace to indicate

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

the route they had taken ; and the capture of a Russian soldier who was found asleep in a thicket, was the only trophy of a day which was expected to have been so decisive and brilliant. The army entered Witepsk and found it as deserted as the Russian quarters. No one was to be seen in it but a few Jews and Jesuits. They could give no information. The French followed in pursuit for six leagues, through a deep and burning sand. At last night put an end to their progress at Aghaponovchtchina. The soldiers, parching with thirst, could get only muddy water to quench it ; and while they were busy in procuring it, Napoleon held a council, the result of which was that it was useless to pursue the Russians any farther at present, and that it was advisable to halt where they were, on the confines of Old Russia. As soon as the Emperor had formed this resolution, he returned to Witepsk with his guards. On entering his head-quarters in that city on the 28th, he took off his sword, and laying it down on the maps which covered his table ; ' Here,' said he, ' I halt. I want to reconnoitre, to rally, to rest my army, and to organise Poland. The campaign of 1812 is over ; that of 1813 will do the rest ! '

CHAPTER XLIV

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

THOSE who expected Napoleon to stop short in the middle of an enterprise like the present or who seriously advised him to fall back to a place of greater safety, could have known very little of his character. He was not one of that description of warriors to whom the trite satire could apply :—

' The King of France with twenty thousand men,
Marched up the hill and then marched down again.'

He had however those about him who gathered up the ' sweepings ' of his mind, and who expected him to be afterwards bound by them, if they fell in with their own timid resolutions or an unforeseen event. Every thing unfavourable to the expedition is sedulously recalled and stamped with a prophetic character and as if it had met the approbation of all that was sound and judicious in the army, though in the endless agitation of the question and suggestion of every possible view of the subject, it was probably only as one remark in a thousand, that on which the least stress was laid at the time, and though in all likelihood not a single individual in the whole camp ever dreamt of the catastrophe

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

that followed, but which in these retrospective pages is traced out on its fullest extent and with every mark of verisimilitude upon the face of it. Buonaparte might in a fit of weariness and disgust have thrown out some such expressions as those mentioned at the end of the last chapter or traced an hypothetical line of defensive operations from Riga in the North to Bobruisk in the South, and laughed at Murat who resented the retreat of the Russians as if it were the breach of an appointment by saying, 'It is a three years' war; 1813 will see us at Moscow, 1814 at Petersburg'—but it is very unlikely he ever seriously entertained any such ideas. The agitation and restlessness he is said to have manifested at this period are easily accounted for from the heat of the weather, the lassitude he experienced, and a variety of projects for circumventing and detaining a foe that constantly eluded his grasp, without supposing that he balanced between action and inaction or had determined upon taking up his winter-quarters in the height of summer. It became him to do something. If he could not find men to fight with, he must go in search of places, of which the conquest would give an *éclat* to his arms and put a natural period to his march. Accordingly, we find that now more than ever, his imagination was possessed with the idea of Moscow captive: this was the term of all his fears, the object of all his hopes. In the possession of that city he was to find every thing, or a compensation for it in romantic achievement and endless renown. It was absurd to suppose that he would wait eight months for an object, which he felt to be within his reach in twenty days. If there had ever been an appearance of indecision, it very soon vanished. Already full of the plan which was to crown him with success, he ran to his maps. He here saw nothing but Smolensk and Moscow—the great Moscow, the holy city—names which he repeated with satisfaction, and which seemed to increase his eagerness. At the sight of them, he appeared inflamed by the genius of war. His voice became harsh, his glance fiery, and his whole air stern and fierce. His attendants retired from his presence, through fear as well as respect: but at length his mind was fixed, his determination taken, his march traced out: immediately the tempest was calmed, and having given consistency and utterance to his conceptions, his features resumed their wonted character of placidity and cheerfulness.

He did all he could to gain over the officers to his opinion, resolving doubts, answering objections, and entering into the question with that frankness and simplicity which secured by manners the fidelity and attachment of many whom neither his misfortunes, their country, nor the cause of mankind could bind. He redoubled his attentions to the soldiers; if he met any parties of wounded, he stopt them to inquire into their situation and history; he often sent wine from his table to the

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

sentinel nearest him ; and reviewed the troops which were in his neighbourhood every day. Encouraged in this manner, the formidable names of Smolensk and of Moscow did not alarm them. In ordinary times and to ordinary habits, an untried soil, new tribes of people, a distance which magnified every thing, would have appeared insuperable obstacles ; but to such men, these were precisely the strongest attractions. They delighted only in hazardous situations, which became the more exciting in proportion as their peril and their novelty gave them an air of singularity and of adventure. Ambition was now let loose from all restraint : every circumstance tended to inspire a passion for renown ; they had plunged into a boundless career. How indeed was it possible to estimate the ascendancy gained and the impulse given by a powerful conqueror, who had said to his soldiers after the victory of Austerlitz, ' Name your children after me ; I give you leave ; and if one among them shall prove worthy of us, I will bequeath him my property and declare him my successor ! '

The union of the two wings of the Russian army near Smolensk and a severe repulse received by Sebastiani at Inkowo, together with the news of the peace of Bucharest, hastened the decision of Napoleon. The march of Barclay upon Rudnia and other circumstances convinced him that the Russian forces were gathering to a head and meditated an attack upon him. He therefore determined to strike the first blow. He wrote letters to the Prince of Echmuhl and his other lieutenants to follow him with all speed to Smolensk. He then separated himself from Oudinot, leaving St. Cyr to reinforce him ; and removing his line of operation from Witepsk to Minsk, suddenly threw himself southward with a hundred and eighty-five thousand men to the left of the Dnieper, on the left flank and in the rear of the enemy, who were thinking of surprising him. In this manner he proposed to outmarch the Russian General and reach Smolensk before him : if he succeeded, he would have cut off the Russian army not merely from Moscow, but from the centre and the south of Russia ; and have accomplished against Barclay and Bagration united what he had vainly attempted at Witepsk against Barclay alone. This was one of those grand resolves, which ably executed change the face of war and of empire ; the result in this case was not answerable.

Buonaparte left Witepsk on the 13th of August, after halting there a fortnight. He was accompanied by his guard, the army of Italy, and three divisions of Davoust's. From Orcha (to the south of Witepsk), as far as Liadi, the French proceeded in a strait column along the left bank of the Dnieper. In this moving mass, the first corps, which had been trained by Davoust, was distinguished by the order and completeness which prevailed through its several divisions ; and it was held up

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

as a model to the rest of the army. The division of Gudin lost its way in swampy woods, owing to an ill-written order, and did not join till twenty-four hours after. The Emperor traversed the mountainous and woody country lying between the Duna and the Boristhenes in a single day, and crossed the latter river at Rassasna. Its distance from their native country, its historical celebrity, the antiquity of its name excited the imaginations of the French, who at last perceived only a narrow stream lined with brambles and brushwood. The Emperor slept in his tent in advance of Rassasna. On the following day the army marched together, ready to fall promptly into order of battle, with the Emperor on horseback in the midst of them. The advanced-guard drove before it two *pulks* of Cossacks, who only wanted to destroy the bridges and some stacks of forage. As far as Liadi, the villages bore rather a Jewish than a Polish aspect. The Lithuanians sometimes fled at the approach of the army : the Jews always remained, indifferent to ill-usage and bent on gain. They were of great service to the French both from their dexterity in business and their knowledge of German. Beyond Liadi, Old Russia commenced, and the Jews were seen no more ; the general quarrel which mankind wage with that people being enhanced by their aversion to images, for which the Muscovites entertain a reverence approaching idolatry.

On the 15th of August, at three o'clock, the army were in sight of Krasnoe, which a Russian regiment seemed disposed to defend, but it was defeated by Marshal Ney. On entering the town, six thousand Russian infantry were observed beyond it in two columns, with several squadrons covering their retreat. This was the corps of Neweroskoi. The ground was well adapted for cavalry, and Murat took possession of it ; but the bridges having been broken down, he had some difficulty in getting at the enemy. Neweroskoi united his columns and formed them into a complete square of such thickness, that Murat's cavalry was unable to penetrate or throw it into disorder : when closely pressed, they faced about, awaited the onset with firmness, and discharged their musquets ; then profiting by the disorder they had created, they continued their retreat. At one time, this column was marching on the left of the high road through some standing corn, when suddenly its progress was impeded by a row of strong palisades, and the Wurtembergers were ordered to rush upon them and make them lay down their arms. But they stood their ground, repulsed the Wurtemberg corps and (having made an opening in the palisades) pursued their way. Neweroskoi hastened to attain a defile which Grouchy had orders to reach before him ; but that general had only six hundred horse with him. The 8th chasseurs were also too weak to intercept so powerful a column, which was the only Russian corps between Smolensk and the

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

French ; and had it been taken, that capital would have been left without defence. Neweroskoi however effected his retreat like a lion, leaving behind him one thousand two hundred killed on the field of battle, a thousand prisoners, and eight pieces of cannon. It so happened that this action took place on the Emperor's birth-day. Murat and Ney, on delivering in the report of their success, ordered a salute to be fired from a hundred pieces of artillery. The Emperor, somewhat displeased, observed that in Russia it was necessary to be economical of French powder. But he was told that it was Russian powder that had been taken the night before ; and this explanation seemed to satisfy him. Neweroskoi hastened to shut himself up in Smolensk, leaving some Cossacks in his rear to burn the forage.

In the mean time, Barclay and Bagration stationed towards Inkowo between the Dnieper and Lake Kasplia hesitated about attacking the French army, whom they believed to be still in their front. Twice they had resolved upon it, and twice drew back. A misunderstanding existed between the two generals ; Barclay, a German, cool, scientific, systematic, wishing to protract the defensive war ; Bagration, an old Russian of the Suwarrow school, brave, impetuous, and eager for battle. The former had no one but Alexander on his side : the army and the other generals as well as Bagration looked upon the advance of the French on the Russian soil as little less than sacrilege. But when they heard of the situation of Neweroskoi, there was no longer a question of forcing the French lines ; all ran to arms and hastened to the rescue of Smolensk. The deluded inhabitants were returning from their temples where they had been to give God thanks for the success of their troops ; when they beheld them bleeding and conquered, flying before the victorious French. Murat and Ney had already commenced an attack on the city. Ney had indeed attempted to carry the citadel by a *coup-de-main*, in which he lost two or three hundred men and was himself slightly wounded. His ardour having cooled, he withdrew to an eminence on the river's bank, where he was examining the city and the surrounding country, when on the other side of the Dnieper he thought he could perceive considerable masses of troops in motion : he hastened to inform the Emperor of the circumstance and to conduct him to the spot. Napoleon having arrived there, distinguished in the midst of clouds of dust, long dark columns interspersed with the glittering of innumerable arms. These masses were advancing with such rapidity that they seemed to run. It was in fact Barclay and Bagration at the head of a hundred and twenty thousand men. At this sight, Napoleon clapped his hands in a transport of joy, and exclaimed ' At last I have them ! ' But once more he was deceived. He immediately passed along the line of his own troops, and assigned to each commander his

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

station leaving a large plain unoccupied in front between himself and the Dnieper. This he offered to the enemy for a field of battle. They did not choose to accept it; and the next morning, while various opinions were entertained on the subject, were seen in full retreat towards Elnia on the opposite bank of the Dnieper. Napoleon could neither stop nor overtake them. He had nothing now to do but to secure Smolensk. The attack was carried on with various success during the day. Here a cannon-ball cut down an entire row of twenty-two men belonging to a battalion that had presented itself in flank before the Russian batteries; there stationed on a number of little hills, the army applauded as in a theatre by the clapping of hands the struggles and the success of their comrades. Ney was to attack the citadel; Davoust and Lobau the suburbs; Poniatowski was to descend the river, destroy the bridges and cut off the retreat of the garrison. The sharp sounds of the discharge of musquetry from the walls continued all day, and annoyed Napoleon, who wished to draw off the troops.

Night now came on: Napoleon withdrew to his tent, and Count Lobau, having obtained possession of the ditch, had ordered some shells to be thrown into the city to dislodge the enemy. Almost immediately were seen rising thick and black columns of smoke, with occasional gleams of light, and then sparks and burning flakes; at length, pyramids of flame ascended from every part. These distinct and distant fires soon became united in one vast conflagration, which rose in whirling and destructive grandeur, hung over nearly the whole of Smolensk, and consumed it amidst ominous and awful crashes. This disaster, which Count Lobau very naturally imputed to himself (though it was the work of the Russians) threw him into great consternation. The Emperor, seated in front of his tent, viewed the terrific spectacle in silence. Neither the cause nor the result could yet be ascertained; and the night was passed under arms. About three in the morning, a subaltern officer belonging to Davoust had ventured to the foot of the wall and scaled it, without giving the least alarm. Emboldened by the silence which reigned around him, he made his way into the city; when suddenly hearing a number of voices, speaking with the Slavonian accent, the Frenchman gave himself up for lost. But at this instant the level rays of the sun discovered in those whom he first imagined to be enemies, the Poles of Poniatowski. They had been the first to penetrate into the city, which Barclay had just abandoned to the flames. Buonaparte the next day entered Smolensk, walking over its smoking ruins amidst heaps of dead, and sat down on some matting at the door of a cottage (while the bullets from the citadel, still in possession of the Russians, were whizzing round his head) to declaim for an hour on the cowardice of Barclay, the fine field of battle he had offered him, and the

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

speedy dissolution of the Russian army from such base and dispiriting conduct, not being as yet in the secret of the new Scythian tactics of defending a country by burning its capitals ! While heated with this discourse, a messenger came up with the news that Regnier and Schwartzenberg had beaten back Tormasof, who had made an attempt on Warsaw. 'Sec,' said he, 'the wretches, they even suffer themselves to be beaten by the Austrians;' and glancing round a quick and inquisitive eye, added, 'I hope none but Frenchmen hear me.' About this time Rapp and Lauriston arrived at head-quarters, the one from France, the other from Petersburg; they brought the Emperor important information, but made no change in his determinations. Although the multiplied disasters and fugitive nature of the war were with some a reason for stopping short or turning back, they were with Napoleon an additional motive for advancing forward and bringing it to a speedy and decisive issue. To lose no time, he confided the advanced-guard to Murat and Ney; and placed Davoust under the orders of the King of Naples.

The Russians still defended the suburb on the right bank of the Dnieper. The French employed the 18th of August and the ensuing night in re-constructing the bridges. On the 19th before day, Ney crossed the river by the light of the burning suburb. He and his men at first ascended slowly up the steep acclivity before them, not knowing whether a large Russian force might not be waiting at the top to rush down upon them; but they found only a band of Cossacks who disappeared at their approach. The two roads here diverge to Petersburg and Moscow; and it was discovered with some difficulty that the Russian infantry had taken the one to Moscow. Ney might soon have got up with them; but as that road follows the course of the Dnieper, he was obliged to cross the streams running into it. Each of these had excavated a channel or deep bed, on the opposite side of which the enemy successively established themselves, and whence it was necessary to dislodge them. The first, which was that of Stubna, did not detain him long; but the hill of Valoutina, at the foot of which flows the Kolowdnia, was very severely contested. The stubborn resistance experienced on this spot has been attributed by some to an ancient tradition, which represented it as ground consecrated by victory. But what was ascribed to superstition, was owing to accident. Barclay not liking to take the direct road to Moscow, along the right bank of the Dnieper, which exposed him to the French fire from the other side or would have betrayed his retreat in the night by the rolling of the carriage-wheels, had gone back by a circuitous route which joins the main-road near Valoutina, and where Ney arrived almost at the same time as the Russians. He had only to pass the height in order to block up

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the defile into which they had entered with all their artillery and baggage. A furious combat ensued. Thirty thousand men were successively engaged in it on either side : the obstinacy and carnage were equal, and night put an end to it, during which the Russians made their escape. Junot with the Westphalians had at one time got in their rear ; but at the moment of attack, his heart failed him, and he nearly lost his marshal's staff by it. Buonaparte, who was at Smolensk buried in business and dispatches, and who thought that the report of cannon was merely owing to some affair of advanced posts, would hardly believe there had been a battle, till the account of the misfortune of General Goudin, an excellent officer, (who soon after died of the wounds he had received), overwhelmed him with chagrin. It is supposed that had he been on the spot to give directions, the Russian army might have been completely disabled. Such is the consequence of undertaking more than human capacity can effect !

The next day at dawn, he appeared on the field of Valoutina. The soldiers of Ney and those of the division Goudin (bereaved of their leader) were ranged round the dead bodies of their companions and of the Russians. The battalions of Goudin appeared reduced to mere platoons, but they seemed to feel a pride in the reduction of their numbers. The Emperor could not proceed in front without stepping or trampling upon the bodies of the slain and scattered bayonets absolutely wrenched and twisted by the violence of the conflict. But over these horrors he threw a drapery of glory. His gratitude transformed the field of battle into a field of triumph. He felt that the time was come in which his soldiers required the support of praises and reward. Accordingly, never were his looks more impressive and affectionate. He declared that this battle was the most brilliant exploit in their military history. In his rewards he was magnificent. The 12th, 21st, and 127th of the line and the 7th of the light troops received eighty-seven decorations and promotions. These were the regiments of Goudin. Hitherto the 127th had marched without an eagle, because it had not according to the established rule conquered one on the field of battle. The Emperor delivered one to it with his own hands. He also rewarded and distinguished the corps of Ney. The favours were valuable in themselves and for the mode in which they were conferred. He was surrounded by every regiment in turn as by a family of his own. These cordial manners, which had the effect of making the privates the companions in arms of the master of Europe—forms which brought back the long-regretted usages of the republic—delighted and transported them. He was a monarch, but he was the monarch of the Revolution ; and they were devotedly attached to a sovereign who had elevated himself by his own merits and who elevated others in propor-

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

tion to theirs. In him there was every thing to stimulate zeal and effort, nothing to excite offence or imply reproach.

Never was there a field of battle better employed to stir and exalt the feelings ; but when out of the observation of the soldiers, his reflections took a different tone. On his return to Smolensk, every object tended to oppress and deject him. This city was one vast hospital, and the groans of anguish which issued from it, prevailed over the acclamations of triumph which had been just heard on the field of Valoutina. At Wilna and Witepsk there had been a want of hospitals, but this was not the case at Smolensk. Fifteen large brick-buildings saved from the flames had been set apart for this purpose ; and there was plenty of wine, brandy, and medicines. There was only a want of dressings. At the end of the second night, the surgeons who were indefatigable had used up all the linen for bandages or for staunching the wounds ; and it was necessary to substitute the paper found in the city-archives. One hospital containing a hundred wounded had been forgotten for three days, and was discovered by Rapp in the most distressing state : Napoleon immediately ordered his own stock of wine and many pecuniary gratuities to be bestowed on these unfortunate men, whose sufferings had only kept them alive. There was another consideration in addition to the inevitable accidents and evils of war, which now gave the Emperor a good deal of uneasiness. The burning of Smolensk he could no longer believe to be merely casual or even the result of a sudden fit of desperation. It was the effect of cool determination. The Russians had employed the utmost caution and arrangement in this work of destruction, and then (as he learnt from a Greek priest) laid it on the French, whom they represented as bands of incendiaries or legions of demons, headed by Antichrist. The nobles and their slaves fled from their approach like a pestilence. The natives even refused to touch the utensils which the French soldiers had employed. One great fear of the Russians was that their slaves would rise up and throw off their bondage ; and it was therefore an object to prevent their having any communication with the French. They made use of the most improbable and disgusting fables to excite their terror and hatred, and of their ignorance and degradation, to perpetuate that ignorance and degradation. It was their dread that the doctrines of the Revolution might loosen their grasp on the wretched serfs who compose the population of the country that first made them send their barbarous hordes against the French territory ; the consequences of which now came back to themselves to their infinite horror and surprise in the shape of an invasion, which might produce the same effects. Buonaparte should have availed himself of the offers that were made to him to detach the serf from the proprietor and the soil. But this was his weak side. He

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

did not understand extreme remedies ; and he was fonder of power than of liberty !

The intelligence which now reached him from every side roused and kindled his ardour. His lieutenants seemed to have performed more than himself. Accounts were just received that St. Cyr, having taken the command from Oudinot who was wounded, had obtained an advantage over Wittgenstein, which would have been more decisive, had not a French brigade, stationed to support a battery, but seized with a sudden panic, fled across the mouths of the cannon so as to prevent their discharge, and to enable the Russian cavalry to get possession of them. In this action two Bavarian generals were killed, of the names of Dero y and Liben. They were of the same age, had served in the same wars, had advanced by the same steps, and met the same death : one grave received them both. On hearing of this victory, the Emperor dispatched the bâton of marshal of the empire to General St. Cyr, and placed a number of crosses at his disposal.

Barclay had retreated as far as Dorogobouje without offering resistance ; but a little beyond that town on the morning of the 23rd of August, a slight wood which Murat wanted to reconnoitre was vigorously disputed with him ; and having pierced through it, he saw the whole Russian army (Barclay being just then joined by Bagration) drawn up in order of battle. He immediately sent word to the Emperor to inform him of it. Davoust also, who did not approve of the dispositions which Murat had made, wrote to him to hasten forward if he did not wish Murat to engage without him. At this intelligence which he received in the night between the 24th and 25th of August, Napoleon started from his state of inaction with transport. To a disposition so enterprising and determined, suspense was torture. He pressed on with his Guard, and proceeded twelve leagues without stopping ; but on the evening of the day before, the enemy had disappeared. Their retreat was attributed by the French to a movement made by Montbrun to their left ; by themselves to a false position taken up by Barclay, which Bagration having immediately discovered, did not even abstain from imputations of treachery. Discord and impatience were at their height in the Russian camp, and they only waited for the arrival of Kutusof to supersede Barclay. The French Emperor on his side was no longer in a state of fluctuation ; he pressed forward, without apprehending any formidable consequences from the defection of the Swedes and Turks ; and neglecting the hostile armies of Essen at Riga, of Wittgenstein before Polotsk, of Hoertel before Bobruisk and of Tchitchakof in Vohlynia. He knew that wherever he was, there was the centre of the war ; and he thought that every obstacle, both of arms and policy, would vanish at the first shock of the thunder-

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

bolt which he was about to launch. And yet his column of attack, which when he entered Witepsk amounted to one hundred and eighty-five thousand men, was not now more than one hundred and fifty-seven thousand : part he had left to occupy Witepsk, Orcha, Mohilef, and Smolensk : the rest of those that were missing had been killed or wounded, or were struggling in his rear. But a hundred and fifty-seven thousand men he deemed sufficient to destroy the Russian army by a complete victory and to gain possession of Moscow.

The Emperor had advanced so rapidly to Dorogobouje that he was obliged to wait there for his army and let Murat go in pursuit of the Russians. He found that place in the same state as Smolensk, that is, in ashes ; particularly the trading-quarter, where the people had something to lose, and who forming a sort of middle class, a commencement or *nucleus* for a ' third estate,' might be accessible to the promises of liberty. The army now moved on in three columns abreast ; the Emperor, Murat, Davoust, and Ney in the middle, on the great road to Moscow ; Poniatowski on the right, and the army of Italy on the left. The principal column, which followed the track of the Russians, fared the worst ; but orders had been given to the troops to take provisions with them for several days. Each regiment was accompanied by a number of little Polish horses, carts for the conveyance of the baggage, and a drove of oxen. Each soldier had in his knapsack four biscuits of a pound each, and ten pounds of flour ; and the army had with them a number of little portable ovens. The soldiers were becoming accustomed to this wandering life, and learnt to make the most of the scanty means afforded them. From Slawkowo, a few leagues in advance of Dorogobouje, Napoleon on the 27th of August sent orders to Marshal Victor, then on the Niemen, to repair to Smolensk. It was also from the same head-quarters that he published the details of his review at Valoutina, in which were inserted the names even of the private soldiers who had there distinguished themselves. He added that ' at Smolensk the conduct of the Poles had astonished the Russians, who had been accustomed to despise them.' This had the effect of redoubling the hatred and efforts of the Poles against them. In the course of the march, he took a delight in dating from the middle of Old Russia a multitude of decrees which would find their way to the smallest hamlet in France. Murat had pushed the enemy beyond the Osma, a narrow river with high banks, like the greater number of rivers in that country. The Russian rear-guard had taken up a position on the opposite bank ; but Murat had gone round by a ford, and placed himself between the enemy and the river at the imminent risk of being precipitated into it, which nothing but his desperate courage could have prevented. He only lost a great number of lives to no purpose. At the moment of the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

chief danger, a battery of the Prince of Echmuhl refused to fire. This incident produced a violent altercation the next day between Murat and Davoust in the presence of the Emperor at Semlewo. It had nearly ended in a challenge.

On the 28th of the month, the army traversed the vast plains of the government of Wiazma. They passed hastily over the open fields, several regiments marching abreast. The high road was given up to the train of artillery and to the hospital-waggon. The Emperor appeared in every part on horseback. Murat's letters and his approach to Wiazma still gave hopes of a battle. He was engaged in calculating as he rode forward how many thousand cannon-balls would be required to destroy the enemy's army. Napoleon had appropriated a certain station for the baggage, and had published an order for burning all carriages that should be found among the troops, as they might impede and seriously endanger the operations of the army. A carriage of General Narbonne, his aide-de-camp, being found in this situation, was burnt on the spot without suffering any thing to be taken out. A letter from Berthier to Barclay, dated from Ribky, and relating to some indifferent matters, concluded with these words : 'The Emperor commands me to entreat you to present his compliments to the Emperor Alexander, and to say to him that neither the vicissitudes of war nor any other circumstance can impair the friendship which he feels for him.' On the same day, the 28th of August, the advanced guard drove the Russians before them into Wiazma. The troops, parched with thirst, could here procure only a little muddy water, of which the Emperor himself was glad to drink. At night the enemy destroyed the bridges of the Wiazma ; and after pillaging the town set fire to it. It was here first ascertained beyond a doubt by the especial orders of the Emperor, that the Russians and not his own soldiers were the incendiaries. A sutler whom he found pillaging was ordered to be shot. But those about him stationed the man a short time after where the Emperor was expected to pass, with a woman and several children kneeling by his side, who were to represent his wife and family ; and the man was immediately forgiven. Such was his well-known easiness of disposition.

He was still on horseback when he saw Belliard riding up with an account of a new disagreement between Murat and Davoust, and that Davoust had refused to let his divisions act under Murat's orders. In consequence Buonaparte sent Berthier to place the division Compans, which gave rise to the dispute, under the immediate command of the king. Davoust shut himself up in his obstinacy and in his tent ; Murat gave vent to his vexation at the indignity offered him in a torrent of complaints and even of tears. While the advanced-guard were pur-

EXPEDITION INTO RUSSIA

suings the Russians as far as Gjatz, exchanging only a few shots with them, Napoleon heard at Wiazma that the Russians were celebrating *Te Deum* at Petersburg for the victories of Witepsk and Smolensk. The Emperor was astonished at this account. '*Te Deums!*' he exclaimed, 'they dare then to lie not only to man but to God!' In this retreat of the Russians, though they burned the towns, the villages were spared, which supplied the French with forage, grain, ovens, and shelter. This preference was attributed by some to the hatred of the Cossacks to towns as implying a greater advance in civilization. On the 1st of September at noon Murat was separated from Gjatz only by a coppice of pines. Gjatz is divided in two by a river, the trading part being on the side nearest Asia; and the French took possession of one half, while the Russians were burning the other. The latter had disappeared behind the flames, and the foremost of the light troops were in pursuit, when one of the inhabitants came out and ran towards them, exclaiming that he was a Frenchman. He was conducted to Davoust, who interrogated him. He said, that an entire change had taken place in the Russian counsels; that Kutusof had succeeded Barclay; that a battle was to be the consequence; and that they had retreated to Borodino, not to avoid the enemy, but to take up a strong position, to root themselves there, and either conquer or perish.

An officer that arrived as a flag of truce about the same time confirmed this intelligence by his sinister looks and answers. Being asked by one of the French generals what they should meet with between Wiazma and Moscow, he sternly replied, 'Pultowa.' He expressed his surprise at the utter absence of precaution in the French camp. Some Cossacks in their eagerness to burn the bridge over the Gjatz, had been left behind. Napoleon had two of them called to him, and he rode into the town with his interpreter and one of these barbarians (with their uncouth costume and wild physiognomy) on each side of him. Their answers corresponded with the information that had just been received. Barclay having thus carried into effect, in spite of clamour and increasing opposition, the plan of retreat which he had boasted of in 1807 as the only one to save Russia, was superseded by Kutusof, a general of the old school, with Tartar features and character, fierce and supple, a favourite with his countrymen from his resemblance to them, and possessed of more reputation than skill, though not without a certain tact in availing himself of circumstances. Barclay continued to serve under his new chief for the rest of the campaign with the same steadiness and perseverance that he had shown in the command of the army. At length, the Russian army halted. Miloradowitch, sixteen thousand recruits, and a vast multitude of peasants bearing the cross and shouting, 'It is the will of God,' repaired to the plain of Borodino,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

which was already broken up and formed into entrenchments. Napoleon announced an approaching battle to the army. He allowed them two days to rest, to prepare their arms, and collect provisions; at the same time warning the detachments sent off for supplies, that if they did not return on the morrow, they would deprive themselves of the honour of fighting. He then employed himself in surveying the environs of his head-quarters. He remarked the advance which they exhibited in agriculture; but at the sight of the Gjatz which pours its current into the Wolga, the early and habitual feelings of glory superseded in the conqueror of so many rivers every other sentiment, and he expressed a lofty complacency in having become the lord of those waters which were destined to visit Asia, as if they were flowing on to announce to that quarter of the world his fame and conquests, and to open a passage for him to it.

On the 4th of September, the army still divided into three columns left Gjatz and its environs. Murat had advanced a few leagues onward. Since Kutusof's arrival, troops of Cossacks had hovered about the heads of the French columns. Murat was vexed at seeing his cavalry compelled to attack so contemptible an adversary. It is asserted that on this day, under one of those impulses which would have become the age of chivalry, he darted suddenly and alone towards their line, halted at only a few paces from it, and there, waving his sword, intimated his orders for them to withdraw with an air and gesture so commanding that the barbarians instantly retired in astonishment. He had proceeded but a little way further, when he was compelled to halt at Griednewa. A deep ravine was here obstinately defended by Konownitzin; and the advanced-guard of the Viceroy coming up had engaged with the Cossacks, who for a wonder stood their ground. Platof afterwards related that in this affair an officer near him was wounded, who immediately ordered the sorcerer who accompanied him to be soundly beaten in the presence of the whole body of Cossacks for not having turned aside the ball by his incantations, as he had been expressly charged so to do! Konownitzin withdrew; and on the 5th his bloody track was traced as far as the enormous monastery of Kolotskoi, a Gothic building constructed in former ages, when even the temples of religion were not sacred from the fury of domestic war. As the army advanced, they found the whole plain infested by clouds of Cossacks; the corn spoiled, the villages sacked, and the devastation general. These were signs that clearly indicated the field of battle, which Kutusof was preparing for the Grand Army. Napoleon ascended an eminence from which he surveyed the whole country. From the nature of the ground, the Kalouga making a sudden turn to the left at Borodino to join the Moskwa, he concluded that the enemy stationed on the heights behind

BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA

this river, must be strong on their centre and right, and weak on their left. In proof of this, they had here posted a great number of troops and constructed a redoubt with great care on one side of the high-road. Napoleon as a preliminary step, gave orders for the carrying of this redoubt. The villages and woods were immediately taken possession of. The attack was general. The Russians were driven back on Borodino. The redoubt remained exposed in front of their army. Compans placed his cannon on some high ground which served as a platform to batter it, and as a shelter for his infantry to advance. The 61st marched foremost, and the redoubt was taken at the first onset at the point of the bayonet : but Bagration sent reinforcements, which retook it. Three times did the 61st wrest it from the possession of the Russians, and three times were they driven from it by them. At last, however, they maintained their acquisition, though covered with blood, and nearly half of them destroyed. Next day when the Emperor passed this regiment in review, he inquired where the third battalion was : 'It is in the redoubt,' replied the colonel. A neighbouring wood still swarmed with riflemen ; but at length the attack on Schewardino by Morand and on the woods of Elnia by Poniatowski succeeded in driving back Bagration's troops, and Murat's cavalry swept the plain. The Emperor appointed its station to each corps ; the remainder of the army entered the line ; and a general discharge of small arms continued till each party had fixed upon its ground and till night fell. One of Davoust's regiments, taking its rank in the foremost line, and deceived by the darkness, marched into the very midst of the Russian cuirassiers, and effected its retreat with difficulty and with considerable loss.

CHAPTER XLV

THE BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA

THE Emperor encamped behind the army of Italy on the left of the high-road ; the Old Guard having formed a square round his tent. As soon as the discharge of small-arms had ceased, the fires were kindled. The Emperor slept but for a short time. General Caulaincourt arrived from the captured redoubt. Hardly a single prisoner had fallen into the hands of the French, which was accounted for from the circumstance that the Russians, having been lately accustomed to fight with the Turks who give no quarter, would rather be killed than surrender. Napoleon on this determined that a battle of artillery would be the surest ; and sent orders to hasten on those parks which had not yet

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

come up. On that night a thin, cold rain began to fall, and autumn proclaimed its arrival by violent gusts of wind. A good deal of stress is laid on this circumstance by those who wish to accuse Buonaparte of inertness and indecision two days after, and who to confirm their theory assume a peculiar sympathy between the seasons of life and the seasons of the year. The speculation would be more pertinent, if he had lost the battle, or if he had not lost another nearer to the solstice. It is certain from better authority that he had a severe cold on the morning of the 7th, if that must be supposed to have thrown a damp upon his faculties, or if his scruples and suspense (whatever they might be) did not arise from another cause, the seeing a still more formidable enemy—the hatred, fear, and despair of a whole people, and the very genius of barbarous desolation standing aghast behind the physical force opposed to him. This in truth waited for him in the sullen back-ground, and he was likely to see and feel it sooner than others. He himself calls the battle of the Moskwa ‘the most brilliant of all his feats of arms;’ and he would hardly do this, if it had been the least so. It was the most bloody and the hardest-contested, which the French critics consider as a damning circumstance. ‘The number of the dead,’ they say, ‘only proves the determination of the enemy’ :—as if French imagination shrunk from the idea even of victory, except over a flying foe. So much has their courage and their sense of glory to do with vanity, and so little with fortitude!

The hostile fires were several times thought to be on the wane during the night; and there was a doubt that they might still retreat before morning. However, the light of the Russian bivouacs was extinguished only by that of returning day. For once there was no occasion to go far in search of them: the sun of the 6th of September rose upon the two armies in the same position, in which the preceding day had left them. The Emperor took advantage of the earliest dawn to advance between the two lines, and observe from a succession of eminences the whole front of the enemy’s camp. He found the Russians in possession of all the heights on a semicircle of two leagues’ extent from the Moskwa to the old Moscow road. Their right bordered the Kalouga from where it discharges itself into the Moskwa as far as Borodino: their centre, from Gorcka to Semenowska, formed the salient part of their line. Their right and their left receded. The Kalouga rendered their right unassailable; and it was too far back to be of much consequence. Barclay commanded the centre on a long level height from Gorcka to the still smoking ruins of the village of Semenowska, both which places were strongly intrenched, with a formidable redoubt of twenty-one pieces of cannon to the left of the first, just above Borodino. The Russian left was under the command of Bagration, beginning at Seme-

BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA

nowska, and ending at Utitz on the old Moscow road. Two hillocks armed with redoubts were in front of him. This was the most accessible point, since the redoubt taken by the 61st the day before could no longer defend the approaches to it. Tutchkof, it is true, was stationed still farther on the Russian left behind a wood on the old Moscow road, but there was room to pass between him and the last redoubt of Bagration and take the left wing of the enemy in flank. Having concluded his reconnoitring, the Emperor formed his plan. 'Eugene,' he said, 'should be the pivot: the battle must begin by the right. As soon as under the protection of the woods, it shall have carried the redoubt opposed to it, it must turn to the left, overthrowing and driving back the Russian army upon their right and into the Kalouga.' In the course of the night, three batteries, of sixty pieces each, were erected in front of the Russians, two on their left, and one near their centre. As soon as day-light broke, Poniatowski with his Poles had orders to advance on the old Smolensk road, turning the wood on which the French right and the Russian left wing were supported; and the first discharge of his cannon was to be the general signal for battle. The whole of the artillery was then to pour upon the left of the Russians; Davoust, Ney, Murat, lastly, the Emperor with the Guard were to precipitate themselves into the openings; and in the confusion the centre and right of the enemy would be uncovered and almost surrounded. This plan, apparently a fine one, was not strictly followed up in the sequel, either from accident, a want of proper energy (as is pretended), or from the stubborn resistance of the adversary.

The Emperor was on the heights of Borodino, taking a last survey of the field of battle, when Davoust, who had also been examining the ground where he was to act, came hastily up to him with a proposal for turning the whole left of the Russian army with forty thousand men. But Napoleon, after listening to the marshal with great attention, replied, 'It was too extensive a movement;' and on Davoust's persisting, exclaimed rather sharply, 'Ah! you are always for turning the enemy: it is too hazardous a manœuvre.' Murat was still convinced that the Russians would retreat before the next morning: Rapp was of a different opinion; and the Emperor again going near to reconnoitre (though with only a few attendants) was recognised by the Russian batteries, and the discharge of one of their cannon was the only sound that broke the silence of the day! So still was the calm before the tempest! No longer (from what he had observed) entertaining the slightest doubt about a battle, he returned to his tent to dictate the order of it. He had surveyed the two armies, and considered them nearly equal; about a hundred and twenty thousand men and six hundred pieces of cannon on each side. Or if the Russians had more men, he had more soldiers:

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the one were prepared to die, the others resolved to conquer. That same evening he issued the following proclamation, which was read to the army the next morning : ‘ Soldiers ! you have now before you the battle which you have so long desired. From this moment the victory depends upon yourselves. It is necessary for us : it will bring us abundance, good winter-quarters, and a speedy return to our country. Act as you did at Austerlitz, Friedland, Witepsk, and Smolensk ; and let remotest posterity cite your conduct on this day. Let it be said of each of you, *He was at the great battle under the walls of Moscow.*’

An extraordinary movement had been observed the same day in the enemy’s camp. Kutusof surrounded with his priests and with the pomp of religion, had paraded an image of the Virgin, the protectress of Smolensk, through the whole army ; pretending it was saved by nothing short of a miracle, and working up the feelings of his audience to a pitch of frenzy against the French as incendiaries, arch-rebels, and sacrilegious disturbers of the sacred soil. All this had its desired and natural effect ; for there is nothing so credulous as ignorance ; no hatred so strong as that of names ; no obedience like that of slaves ; no horror like that of barbarians against all that they themselves are not accustomed to. The liberty for which these people fought was that of being sold like cattle in the market ; their only country was the estate on which they were the live-stock ; their title to a reversion in the skies, their being deprived of every thing on earth ; the invasion of their territory the more shocking as they were convinced they had a perfect right at the call of their leaders to invade and ravage every other country. I do not complain of their fanaticism or self-devotion, for I hold all courage, all attachment to be so far good ; what I complain of is that liberty, truth, justice (when it comes to their turn) want the same gross instincts to defend them. Is passion merely brutal ? Or has not reason too a spark of ethereal fire ?—It happened by mere chance that on the same day the Emperor had received from Paris the portrait of the young King of Rome painted by Gerard. The person who brought it supposed that being so near a great battle, he would put off the opening of the case containing it for some days ; but he had it brought to his tent immediately, and expressed the greatest satisfaction at seeing it. He had it placed on a chair outside his tent that the officers and soldiers of the Guard might take a view of it, and said to those about him, ‘ *Gentlemen, if my son were fifteen, believe me he would be here in the midst of so many brave men otherwise than in a picture.*’ In the evening, Fabvier, an aide-de-camp of Marmont, arrived with the news of the defeat of Salamanca, and took part in the battle the next day.

Night now returned, and with it the apprehension of the escape of

BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA

the Russians. This prevented or interrupted Napoleon's sleep. He repeatedly called out to know the hour, and whether any sounds indicative of retreat had been heard. Another care then assailed him, which was the weak and destitute state of the troops; and he sent and ordered three days' provisions to be immediately distributed to the Guard, and soon after rose himself to see if the sentinels near his tent had received them. He asked Rapp, whether he thought they would gain the victory? 'Undoubtedly,' replied the General, 'but it will be a bloody one.' Fatigue and anxiety had brought on a feverish irritation and a violent thirst, which he in vain endeavoured to quench during the night. At length, five o'clock arrived. One of Ney's officers came to announce that the Marshal had the Russians still in view, and to request leave to begin the attack. This intelligence revived the Emperor. He instantly rose, summoned his officers around him, and leaving his tent exclaimed, 'At last we have them! March! We will to-day open for ourselves the gates of Moscow!'

It was half-past five in the morning when Napoleon arrived near the redoubt, which was captured on the 5th of September. The day dawned, and the Emperor pointing to the east, said to his officers, 'There is the sun of Austerlitz.' But it came directly in the faces of the French and was of advantage to their enemies. In the night the batteries had not been placed far enough in advance; it was necessary to push them forward, which the Russians did not attempt to hinder, seeming fearful to begin first. While the Emperor was waiting for the sound of Poniatowski's cannon on his right, the battle on a sudden began on his left, one of Prince Eugene's regiments, the 106th, having rushed over the bridge of Borodino notwithstanding the efforts of the officers to keep it back, and attacked the heights of Gorcka where it would have been destroyed, had not the 92nd hastened to its relief. Seeing the action thus begun and concluding that Poniatowski was by this time engaged on the old Moscow road, Buonaparte gave the expected signal for attack. In the midst of the thunder that instantly rose on all sides from the previously peaceful plain and silent hills, Davoust with the divisions Compans, Desaix, and thirty cannon at their head, advanced rapidly upon the first Russian redoubt. Their object was to reach the fire of the enemy, and at once silence it. But Compans was wounded with many of the bravest of his troops; and Rapp coming forward to take his place, and urging on the men with fixed bayonets and at a running pace, was the first to reach the redoubt, where he also was wounded. It was the twenty-second time he had been so. A third general who succeeded him fell also. Rapp was conveyed to the Emperor, who exclaimed, 'What! Rapp, always wounded? But how are they going on above there?' The aide-de-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

camp replied that the Guard was wanted to finish the business. 'No,' said Napoleon, 'I will take good care of that; I will gain the battle without them.' Ney with his three divisions, reduced to ten thousand men, hastened to the succour of Davoust, and the fire of the enemy was thus diverted. The 57th Compans, finding itself supported, rushed on against the Russian intrenchments, scaled them, and coming in contact with the enemy, drove them back at the point of the bayonet, and killed great numbers. Ney then attacked and carried the two other redoubts.

It was now mid-day. The left of the Russians being thus forced and the plain open, the Emperor ordered Murat to advance with his cavalry and complete the business. That Prince was almost in the same instant seen on the heights; when the second Russian line and some reinforcements sent by Tchitchakof coming up to the assistance of the first, the French received a check in the first flush of their victory, and retreated. The Westphalians, whom Napoleon had just sent to succour Poniatowski, and who were traversing the neighbouring wood, from the direction in which the Poles were moving taking them for the enemy, fired upon them and increased the confusion. Murat narrowly escaped being taken by the Russians by throwing himself into the redoubt, where, with a few men, he defended himself as well as he could with mingled bravery and ostentatious defiance, till Ney came to his assistance. In an hour after by obstinate and repeated charges he had effected the entire defeat of the Russian left wing. But the heights of the ruined village of Semenowska, where their centre commenced, were still untouched; and, defended by continual reinforcements sent by Kutusof, poured a dreadful fire upon Ney and Murat. It was necessary to carry that position. Dufour and the 15th light troops were the first to mount the ascent, and dislodge the Russians. General Friand with some of Davoust's infantry supported this attempt, and although wounded, ensured its success.

Murat and Ney were now exhausted, and sent to Napoleon for fresh supplies, who is said on this occasion to have hesitated, thinking that the troops of Friand and Maubourg already upon the heights would be sufficient to maintain them. Kutusof profiting of the delays summoned all his reserves to the assistance of Bagration, who was enabled to reform his line from the great battery in the middle to the wood near Psarewo on his left; and pushed on his infantry, cavalry, and artillery in one grand and mighty effort against the French. Ney and Murat withstood the rushing tempest; it was as much as they could do. Friand's soldiers, ranged in front of Semenowska, repulsed the first charges; but being assailed by a storm of balls and grape-shot, they were daunted; and one of their chiefs saying to Murat who rode up at that instant,

BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA

'You see we can stay no longer here!' the king replied, 'I can stay here very well myself.' The officer rebuked by these words, coolly answered, 'It is right! Soldiers, face about! Let us advance to be killed!' Murat had sent Borelli again to the Emperor, who still demurred, saying that 'the hour of his battle had not yet arrived,' though some of the enemy's balls had just then come and stopped at his feet, showing that they were gaining ground. At length he gave Lauriston permission to advance the artillery of the reserve to the heights. This indeed appeared to him so important that he presently after urged it with marks of impatience. The generals of artillery soon crowned the crests of the hills. Eighty pieces of cannon discharged their contents at once. The Russian cavalry advanced the first against this brazen barrier; but were obliged to retire in order to escape utter destruction. The infantry then came on in thick masses, in which, though the French batteries made deep and wide openings, yet they still came on; and though divided every instant by death, they still closed their ranks over it, trampling it (as it were) in scorn under their feet. At last they halted, not daring to advance, resolved not to turn back; and Bagration being about this time wounded, either through want of a leader, or stupefaction, or terror, they stood for two entire hours to be cut in pieces without any other movement than the falling of the men, exciting the pity and wonder of their enemies. The ammunition being by this time nearly gone, Ney extended his right to turn the left of the new front opposed to him; Davoust and Murat seconded the attempt, and completed the defeat of what remained of Bagration's troops.

The battle was then over in the plain, and became concentrated near the great redoubt, which Barclay defended with pertinacity against Prince Eugene. The latter immediately after the taking of Borodino had passed the Kalouga in front of this redoubt, where the Russians had relied more especially on the steep heights, surrounded by deep and muddy ravines, upon the exhausted state of the French, and on eighty pieces of heavy cannon which lined the ridge of the redoubt, now exhibiting all the murderous array of steel and fire. But these powerful defences failed them unexpectedly. Surprised by one of those onsets in which the French excel, they on a sudden saw Morand's soldiers (eighteen hundred men of the 30th regiment with General Bonnamy at their head) in the midst of them and fled with precipitation and terror. In this attack Fabvier, the aide-de-camp of Marmont who had arrived the day before from Spain, particularly distinguished himself. This happened early in the morning; and the attack was more vigorous and successful on that point than had been intended. Morand found himself alone in front of several Russian lines; and Kutusof and Yernodof recovering from their panic, turned round upon the French. The

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

30th regiment had to defend itself against an army. But Prince Eugène with its remains and the reinforcements that arrived, maintained himself on the slope of the redoubt for four hours against all that war could display of means, of effort, and of fury. At one time his attention was called off by an alarm of some thousands of Cossacks appearing on his left; but they were soon dispersed. General Montbrun had received orders to attack the redoubt in flank with a body of cavalry. Two hours after, news was brought to Napoleon of his death. He fixed on General Caulaincourt to succeed him, who was overjoyed at the appointment. While the light cavalry was pushing its advantages, he was to turn suddenly to the left with his cuirassiers, and take the formidable redoubt in the rear which Prince Eugène was still in vain attacking in front. Caulaincourt on receiving his instructions, called out, 'You shall see me there immediately, dead or alive!' He instantly set forward, overthrowing in his way all that opposed him. Then turning suddenly to the left, he was the first man to penetrate the bloody redoubt, where almost at the instant a musquet-ball mortally wounded him. His conquest became his tomb. Intelligence of this victory and loss soon reached the Emperor. His brother, the grand-équerry, heard it, and was much affected. Buonaparte asked him in a low tone, 'Would he wish to withdraw?' But he merely lifted his hat, to show that he declined the offer.

While the cavalry were executing this decisive charge, the Viceroy had nearly reached the mouth of the battery, when suddenly he perceived its fire extinguished, its smoke dispersed, and the crest of the acclivity shining with the moveable and polished brass which covered the cuirassiers. Those heights, which had hitherto been Russian, had become French. He hastened to share the victory, to complete it, and to secure the new position. The Russians, however, were by no means disposed to abandon it easily. They withdrew sullenly, like men bent on resistance and revenge. Fortunately for the French, their last column had presented itself near Semenowska and the great redoubt without artillery, which enabled Belliard with thirty pieces of cannon almost literally to blow them into the air. Grouchy at the same time swept the plain with his cavalry. The Viceroy followed Barclay's retreat at a distance, glad to let him escape. The sounds of the firing became weaker and less frequent. Officers came in from every part of the field. Poniatowski and Sebastiani, after an obstinate struggle, had on their side also conquered. The enemy had halted and was intrenching himself in a new position; the day was drawing to a close, and the battle was ended. It was about four o'clock. The Emperor called Marshal Mortier to him and ordered him to keep the field with the Young Guard, but under no circumstances either to

BATTLE OF THE MOSKWA

advance or retreat. He then mounted his horse, and rode over the field of battle, showing the most humane attention to the wounded, remarking on the number of the slain, and seeming to think that his victory had cost him too dear. It is calculated that twenty thousand French and thirty thousand Russians fell in this battle, and that not fewer than fifty-five thousand cannon-balls were fired on each side. During the whole day (according to some accounts) his generals teased Napoleon to employ the Guard, which he as constantly refused, saying at one time that 'he did not sufficiently see the state of his chess-board;' and at another asking, 'But how if there should be another battle to-morrow?' Murat after the battle was over, wanted to take horse, pursue the enemy, and annihilate them as they were passing the Moskwa; to which Buonaparte only replied by a smile. The answer to all these hypercriticisms on Napoleon's want of resolution and the incompleteness of the victory seems to be the burning of Moscow. That must surely have been a great and decisive victory which left the enemy no other resource between them and total subjugation than the destruction of their capital. But this catastrophe gave the finishing blow to French vanity and to French frivolity; and it was then thought necessary to find excuses for the result in the conduct of their leader, who (God save the mark!) was not a Frenchman. Besides, the accounts are evidently warped and coloured to suit a purpose. For instance, Montbrun and Caulaincourt, who fell in the assault on the redoubt, are represented as acting under the immediate direction and appointment of Murat, while not a word is said of Buonaparte, who is kept quite in the back-ground, ignorant and indifferent to what was going on, listlessly walking backwards and forwards, or sitting idly in a chair, unable to support himself or the weather. Whereas the fact is that both these generals went from the very spot where he was, selected and encouraged by the Emperor himself; and under that animating influence parted like the lightning to the war. Davoust, who had been hurt by a fall from his horse, and who would hardly have let him sink into a lethargy, could not keep up with Napoleon on the little platform on which he walked, from his incessant motion. When breakfast was offered him at noon by his faithful Prefect of the Palace, he refused because the battle was not yet won. He afterwards tasted some bread and wine without water, and at ten had taken a glass of punch from being troubled with a severe cold. He supped in his tent at seven in the evening with Berthier and Davoust, when he was remarked to have an air of fatigue and chagrin, which was very uncommon in him. He then dictated the bulletin of the battle. If, however, he was oppressed on this occasion with a 'crust of regality,' with a sense of assumed dignity and superiority without the spirit to make it good, it was the only occasion on which he could be charged

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

with this infirmity ; adversity soon shook it from him ; and he never was more like himself than in his latter campaigns. In fine, if Buonaparte failed (as is insinuated) because he was not a Frenchman, there are surely plenty to take his place : or is it that there are so many who think they could, that they cannot to this hour settle the precedence among themselves ?

Murat the next day followed up the rear-guard of the Russians as far as Mojaïsk. But no traces of them were found on the road. They had taken up a position in front of the walls of that town, while Kutusof with the whole Russian army appeared on the heights beyond. Murat wished to dash forward and attack the enemy, though a deep ravine lay between them, but was prevented by his generals. Some skirmishing notwithstanding took place, in which Belliard was wounded. The Emperor did not arrive on the field of battle before night, and slept at a village within reach of the enemy's fire. On the 9th of September, Mojaïsk was still standing, though deserted like the rest, except by the sick and wounded, on whose account it had been spared out of humanity by the Russians ; but in their eagerness to assail the first French who entered the town, which they did with shells, they set fire to it. While some were endeavouring to extinguish the flames, fifty *voltigeurs* of the 33rd climbed the heights which were occupied by the enemy's cavalry and artillery. This *melodramatic* action excited the astonishment of the Russians and the admiration of the French. After pistolling a Russian officer who summoned them to surrender, after being lost in the black mass of cavalry that enveloped them, they at length emerged to sight amidst the acclamations of the French army, who were lookers-on ; and the Russian rear-guard retired in amazement, leaving them masters of a field of battle in which they occupied only a few feet. When the Russians perceived that a serious attack upon them was intended, they disappeared as usual without leaving any tokens of their flight. It was doubtful whether they had taken the road to Moscow or Kalouga ; but Murat and Mortier took that to Moscow at all hazards, for two days marching forward and eating nothing but pounded corn and horse-flesh. The army of Italy was advancing some leagues to the left of the high road. Near Krymskoie, on the 11th of September, the Russians again came in sight, and Murat, drunk with the fumes of gunpowder, and absolutely bent on engaging, sacrificed without any object two thousand of the Young Guard, who had been kept back so scrupulously on the day of the great battle. Mortier, almost in a state of phrenzy, wrote to the Emperor that he never again would obey Murat. Buonaparte was detained three days at Mojaïsk by a cold and fever, shut up in his chamber, writing orders on slips of paper, or dictating to seven persons at a time. He was so hoarse that he could with

BURNING OF MOSCOW

difficulty be understood ; but while Bessieres was enumerating to him the generals who had been lately wounded in battle, he, from the mere vehemence of emotion, recovered his voice all at once, and said, ' When we have been eight days at Moscow, that will be all over.' He however wrote to Marshal Victor to hasten forward the men to Smolensk that they might be within reach of Moscow. He now learned that Kutusof had not turned on his right flank towards Kalouga as he feared, but had been regularly receding ; and that Murat was within two days' march of Moscow. That great name and the great hope which he attached to it, revived his strength and spirits ; and on the 12th he was well enough to set off to rejoin the advanced guard.

CHAPTER XLVI

BURNING OF MOSCOW

ON the 14th of September, Napoleon rejoined his advanced guard. He mounted his horse a few leagues from Moscow, and marched slowly and circumspectly, expecting the enemy and a battle. The ground was favourable, and works had been marked out ; but every thing had been abandoned, and not an individual was to be met with. At length, the last height had been gained that is contiguous to Moscow, and commands it : it is called the ' Mount of Salvation,' because, from the top of it, at the sight of their holy city, the inhabitants make the sign of the cross, and prostrate themselves on the ground. The light troops soon reached the summit. It was two o'clock, and the great city was glittering with a thousand colours in the sun. Struck with astonishment at the spectacle, they halted, and exclaimed in admiration, ' Moscow ! Moscow ! ' All then quickened their pace, and at length ran forward in disorder, till at last the whole army, clapping their hands, repeated the exclamation in a transport of joy ; as mariners cry ' Land ! Land ! ' at the end of a long and dangerous voyage. At the sight of this golden city, this brilliant clasp of Europe and Asia ; this superb emporium, where the luxury, the customs, and the arts of the two finest divisions of the globe meet : a city admirable in itself, but more so in the wide waste that surrounds it (that, like an isthmus, unites the extremes of barbarism and wealth, the north and the south, the east and the west, antiquity and new-born empire, the crescent with the cross, the palaces of the Cæsars with the halls of Runic superstition), the French army halted (as well they might) with feelings of proud and conscious exultation. What a day of glory was

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

that—to be succeeded by what a fall—which was not unnatural neither, for the height of glory is only built on the extreme verge of danger and difficulty! Over this vast and novel scene, which rose at once to the pomp of history, they fancied themselves moving in splendid procession, amidst the acclamations of surrounding nations: here was the termination which had been promised to all their labours; here they ought to stop, as they could no longer surpass themselves or be surpassed by others. At this moment of enthusiasm, all losses and sufferings were forgotten. It seemed impossible to purchase, at too dear a rate, the proud satisfaction of being able to say for the remainder of their lives, ‘I belonged to the army of Moscow.’

Napoleon himself hastened forward to the view. He stopped in evident transport: an exclamation of self-congratulation fell from his lips. The marshals, too, gathered round him with delight, eager to pay homage to his success. But in the mind of Napoleon the first burst of feeling was never of long duration, as he had too many important concerns to attend to give himself up entirely to his sensations. His first exclamation was, ‘There, at last, is the famous city!’ And his second, ‘It was high time!’ His eye was now intently fixed on that capital, where he imagined that he saw the whole Russian empire. Those walls enclosed the whole of his hopes, peace, the expences of the war, and immortal glory. When, then, would its gates open, and a deputation issue from it, to lay its wealth, its population, its senate, and its chief nobility at his feet? Already, both on his left and on his right, he saw the hostile city attacked by Prince Eugene and Poniatowski, and in front Murat had reached the suburbs; yet there was not the slightest appearance of any thing like a pacific overture. No one had approached but an officer from Miloradowich, to say that he would set fire to the city, if he were not allowed time to evacuate it. The foremost troops of the two armies were for a short time intermingled. Murat was recognized by the Cossacks, who crowded around him to extol his bravery, and admire his finery. He gave them his watch and those of his officers. One of them called him his *Hetman*.

In the mean time, the day was passing away, and the Emperor’s anxiety increased. The army became impatient. A few officers penetrated within the walls. ‘Moscow was deserted.’ At this intelligence, which he repelled with considerable vehemence, but which was confirmed by various reports, Napoleon descended the *Mount of Salvation*, and advanced towards the Dorogomilow gate. He called aloud to Daru, and said, ‘Moscow deserted! A most unlikely event! We must enter it, and ascertain the fact. Go, and bring the *boyars* before me.’ He would not believe that these men

BURNING OF MOSCOW

had all fled. How, indeed, was it possible to conceive, that so many sumptuous palaces and splendid temples and wealthy factories should be abandoned by the owners, like the miserable huts which the army had passed on their march? Daru had now returned, having failed in his mission. Not a single Muscovite was to be found: no smoke was seen ascending from the meanest hearth; nor was the slightest noise to be heard throughout that populous and extensive city: its three hundred thousand inhabitants seemed all dumb and motionless, as by enchantment. It was the silence of the desert. Napoleon still persisted, till an officer went and brought before him half a dozen miserable objects, who were the only inhabitants he could find. He then no longer doubted the fact, shrugged his shoulders, and contented himself with saying, 'The Russians are as yet little aware what effect the taking of their capital will have upon them.'

Murat, with his long and heavy column of cavalry, had entered Moscow for more than an hour. They made their way into that gigantic body, and found it as yet uninjured, but inanimate. Struck with surprise at the mighty solitude, they marched on in silence, and listened to the sound of their horses' feet, re-echoed from tenantless palaces. On a sudden, the fire of small arms attracted their attention. The column halted. Its hindmost horses still covered the plain. Its centre was passing through one of the longest streets of the city: its head was near the Kremlin. The gates of that citadel appeared to be shut: but from within the enclosure proceeded the most savage yells, and a few men and women of the most disgusting aspect, drunk, and uttering frightful imprecations, were observed, fully armed, upon the walls. Murat sent them offers of peace, but in vain; and it became necessary to force the gates with cannon. One of these squalid-looking wretches rushed upon the King of Naples, and attempted twice to kill one of his officers, flying at him like a wild beast, and endeavouring to tear him with his teeth, after his arms were pinioned. Here also were found five hundred recruits, whom the Russians had left behind; and several thousand stragglers and deserters were taken and set at liberty by the advanced guard, who afterwards rejoined their countrymen. Murat, detained only a short time by the capture of the Kremlin, passed hastily on by the road to Voladimir and Asia, in pursuit of the enemy.

Napoleon did not enter Moscow before night. He stopped at one of the first houses in the Dorogomilow suburb. He there appointed Marshal Mortier governor of that capital. 'Above all,' said he, 'no pillage. Your head shall answer for it. Defend Moscow both against friends and foes.' During the night unfavourable reports came in in rapid succession. Some Frenchmen, who had been residents in the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

country, and even an officer of the police, announced the intended burning. The Emperor slept little, called for his attendants every half-hour, to make them repeat the ominous intelligence they had heard, but at last wrapped himself up in incredulity; when, about two o'clock, he was apprised that the flames had broken out. It was at the merchants' palace or Exchange, in the centre of the city and most opulent quarter of it. He immediately gave orders, and dispatched messages with great promptitude. As soon as day-light appeared, he hastened to the city himself, and severely menaced the Young Guard and Mortier. The Marshal shewed him houses covered with iron roofs; closely shut up, and without any marks of violence or an attempt to break into them: yet a black smoke was already issuing from them. Napoleon entered the Kremlin, thoughtful and uneasy. At the sight of this palace, at once of Gothic and modern architecture, founded by the Romanofs and Rurics, of their still extant throne, of the Cross of the great Ivan, and of the most beautiful part of the city, of which the Kremlin commands a view, his hopes revived. He was heard to say, 'I am at length, then, in Moscow; in the ancient city of the Czars; in the Kremlin.' He examined every part with an eager curiosity and a lofty feeling of complacency. In a moment of satisfaction and triumph, he addressed a pacific overture to the Emperor Alexander. A Russian officer of rank, who had just been discovered in the great hospital, was made the bearer of it.

Daylight favoured the exertions of the Duke of Treviso, who succeeded in checking the flames. The incendiaries kept themselves so well concealed, that their existence was much doubted. At length, order was re-established, apprehensions dispelled, and every one betook himself to rest in the best quarters he could find, and determined to make the most of his present situation. Two officers, who had taken up their quarters in one of the buildings of the Kremlin, overlooking the north and west, were awakened about midnight by an overpowering light. They instantly looked out, and saw palaces enveloped in flames, which, after exhibiting all their striking and grotesque architecture in a glare of light, speedily converted them into ashes. The wind being in the north, drove the flames directly upon the Kremlin; so that the two Frenchmen felt considerable alarm for that vast enclosure of buildings, where the choicest troops of the army and their renowned commander were reposing. Already the burning flakes and brands began to be carried towards the roofs of the Kremlin, when the wind suddenly shifting, impelled the mischief in a different direction. The officers satisfied of their own security said, 'Let others look to it now,' and again fell asleep. But they were soon after roused by a new and more vivid burst of light, and saw flames rising in the opposite quarter, which

BURNING OF MOSCOW

still menaced the Kremlin. Three times the wind shifted ; and each time, these stubborn and avenging fires, as if attracted by the size of the building or by what it contained, pointed to the Kremlin. An alarming and awful suspicion now darted on their minds. The Muscovites, informed of the rash and dangerous negligence of their enemies, had possibly conceived the idea of destroying the soldiery together with the city, as they lay overpowered by wine, fatigue, and sleep ; or rather, perhaps, they had expected to involve Napoleon himself in the catastrophe. Moscow seemed no inadequate funeral pile for so mighty a foe. Such a sacrifice might indeed have been made at a cheaper rate than that which was actually paid for it. Not only did the Kremlin enclose a magazine of powder, unknown to the French ; but, through inattention, that very same night a whole park of artillery had been stationed under Napoleon's windows. If a single spark out of the myriads that were flying over their heads had dropped upon one of the *caissons*, the flower of the army, with the Emperor, must have been destroyed.

At length, day appeared. It came to add to the horrors of the scene, while it dimmed its splendour. Many of the officers took shelter in the halls of the palace. The chiefs, including Mortier, overcome with the exertions which they had made for six-and-thirty hours, returned to the Kremlin in a state of exhaustion and despair. All were silent ; but they inwardly blamed themselves as authors of the disaster. It was supposed that the neglect and intoxication of the soldiers must have commenced what the tempest had aggravated ; and they began to regard themselves and to imagine that they would be regarded by all Europe with a sort of horror. But from these painful reflections they were relieved by the accounts which came in fast, and were more and more confirmed, that the Russians were alone chargeable with the calamity. On the first night, between the 14th and 15th, a globe of fire had been let down on the palace of Prince Trubetskoi, and had consumed it. This was the signal for setting fire to the Exchange. Russian police-officers had been seen stirring up the flames with lances dipped in pitch. When the French soldiers tried to get into a house seemingly uninhabited, they were frequently driven back, either by the smoke issuing from it, or by shells bursting within it. A number of frantic men and women were seen roaming amid the flames, with flambeaux in their hands, spreading the work of destruction, and thus completing an image of the infernal world. It appeared that these banditti had been let loose from prison to execute a design, which it exhausted all the fortitude of patriotism or virtue barely to conceive. Orders were given to try and shoot every incendiary on the spot. The army was drawn out ; the Old Guard had taken arms ; alarm, astonishment, mortifi-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

cation filled every breast. Napoleon, whose sleep no one had ventured to disturb during the night, was awake by the double light of day and of the conflagration. Vexed and irritated at first, he was bent on mastering the flames; but he soon yielded to what was absolutely inevitable. Having conquered his enemies by inflicting on them all the terrors of regular warfare, he saw that they were determined to defeat him by inflicting still greater evils on themselves. For once he found himself surpassed by barbarous daring and resolution.

The mighty conquest, for which he had sacrificed so much, and which he had at last achieved, was now vanishing from him in a whirlwind of smoke and flame. He was in a state of excessive agitation, and seemed in a manner parched up by the flames with which he was surrounded. He paced the apartments with hurried steps, quitted and resumed his seat, and left business of the most pressing urgency to run to the windows and observe the progress of the fire; his abrupt and eager movements indicated the trouble of his mind, while he gave vent to his oppressed and labouring feelings in short and broken exclamations:—‘What a frightful spectacle! To have done it themselves! Such a number of palaces! They are genuine Scythians!’ Between him and the fire there was a large and open piece of ground, close to which was the Moskwa with its two quays; yet the glasses of the windows against which he leaned were so violently heated that he could not touch them with his hand. A report was now spread that the Kremlin was undermined; some of the attendants nearly lost their senses through terror; the military waited with firmness whatever doom Fate and the Emperor should assign them: Buonaparte only noticed the alarm with a distrustful smile. He seemed determined to keep possession of his conquest, though the fire gained ground every moment; seizing the bridges, all the accesses to the fortress, the neighbouring houses, and holding him almost a prisoner in the walls of the Kremlin. Night was advancing, and the equinoctial wind blew with redoubled violence. The King of Naples and Prince Eugene arrived at this crisis; and, in conjunction with Berthier, in vain urged him to depart. On a sudden a cry was heard that the ‘Kremlin was on fire.’ Napoleon went out to see the source of the danger, which had been put a stop to in two places; but the tower was still burning, and a police-soldier had been detected there who had set it on fire. The exasperated grenadiers dragged him into the adjoining court-yard, where they dispatched him with their bayonets.

This incident determined Napoleon. All, it was evident, was devoted to destruction: even the ancient and sacred pile of the Kremlin. He descended the northern staircase, celebrated for the murder of the Strelitzes, and gave orders for procuring a guide to conduct him out of

BURNING OF MOSCOW

the city a league on the Petersburg road, to the castle of Petrowski. The flames, however, blocked up the gates of the citadel, and baffled the first attempts made to leave it. After repeated search, a postern-gate was discovered leading across the rocks, which opened towards the Moskwa. Through this narrow pass Napoleon, with his officers and guard, effected his escape from the Kremlin. But being nearer to the flames than before, they could neither go back nor stay where they were: how was it possible to cross the waves of that sea of fire? Even those who had passed through and examined the city, now bewildered by the wind and blinded by the dust, were totally unable distinctly to recognize the several parts, as the streets had disappeared amidst the smoke and ruins. There was, however, no time to be lost: the roaring of the flames grew louder every moment. A single narrow street, crooked and in every part on fire, caught their attention, but looked more like an avenue to the hell before them than a way to avoid it. The Emperor darted forward on foot, without a moment's hesitation, into this formidable pass. He advanced over the scorching cinders which grated under his feet, amidst the perils of dividing roofs and falling beams, and domes covered with melting iron, all scattering tremendous ruins around him. These ruins often impeded his progress. The flames which were consuming the houses between which the group proceeded, after mounting to the greatest height, were turned back by the force of the wind in arches of fire over their heads. They were walking on a soil of fire, under a sky of fire, and between walls of fire. The heat was tormenting and almost putting out their eyes, which yet it was necessary to keep open and intently fixed on the occurring circumstances. A stifling air, hot ashes, innumerable flakes of fire, made their respiration short, dry, and gasping, and they were half suffocated with the smoke. In this state of inexpressible distress, their guide stopped suddenly, quite at a loss and confounded. And if some pillaging stragglers, belonging to the first corps, had not recognized the Emperor through the hurricane of flames, the event must have been fatal. They instantly ran to his aid, and led the way to the still smoking ruins of a quarter of the city which had been laid in ashes in the morning. Just at this time they fell in with the Prince of Eckmuhl. This Marshal, who had been wounded at the Moskwa, had actually ordered his men to carry him through the flames in order to extricate Napoleon or to perish with him. He threw himself into his arms in a transport of joy. The Emperor received him well, but with a composure which in the midst of danger never deserted him. In order to effect his escape, it was yet necessary to pass by a long convoy of gunpowder, which was defiling amidst the fire. This was not the least of his risks, but it was the last; and at night they reached Petrowski.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

On the following morning, the 17th of September, Napoleon directed his first glances towards Moscow, hoping to find the fire subdued ; but he perceived it still raging in all its violence. The whole city seemed to him one vast 'fire-spout,' ascending in awful undulations to the sky, which strongly reflected its terrific glare. The horizon over-head and all round resembled an ocean or huge furnace of fire. He gazed long at the scene in admiration and horror, and at length broke silence by observing, 'This forebodes us no common calamity.' The effort which he had made to reach Moscow had exhausted all his means of hostility, and Moscow had eluded his grasp. Where turn next? Three plans presented themselves : to march strait to St. Petersburg ; to turn to the south and attack Kutusof at Kalouga, or to retreat and fall upon Wittgenstein at Witepsk. The first of these plans was the only one that pleased him. But he understood that his letter to Alexander had passed the Russian advanced posts ; and he might receive an answer to it in eight days. Why not then wait those eight days which were required to rest and recruit his army, to collect the spoils of Moscow, the burning of which would too well justify its pillage, and to give him time to tear his soldiers from so rich a feast of plunder? Yet only the wrecks of that army or that capital were in existence. But he himself and the Kremlin remained. His renown was still unimpaired ; and he was persuaded that the two great names of Napoleon and Moscow united would be able to effect everything. He determined therefore, as soon as possible, to return to the Kremlin, which a battalion of the Guard had preserved.

The circumstances which led to the catastrophe just described have never been fairly acknowledged or fully cleared up ; but little doubt remains upon their general outline and bearing. When Napoleon had separated the Russian army by the suddenness of his movement upon Wilna, Alexander withdrew to Dryssa, and thence to Polotsk. He then left the army to repair to Moscow, preceded by his proclamations, and appeared there first in an assembly of the whole nobility. Having addressed them in person, one simultaneous exclamation burst forth on every side :—'Sire, ask all ! we offer all, accept all !' One of the nobles proposed to raise a militia by giving one peasant out of every twenty-five ; but a hundred voices called out that this was not enough ; and one serf out of every ten was substituted. Thus slaves, the lords of slaves, defend their country ! He then addressed the merchants, and ordered that proclamation to be read to them in which he described Napoleon as 'a man of perfidy and blood ; a Molock, who with treason in his heart and honour on his lips, came to blot out Russia from the face of the world.' At these words the sharp and sanguine countenances of the whole auditory, to whom their long beards gave a striking and almost ferocious appearance, are said to have been absolutely

BURNING OF MOSCOW

kindled to phrenzy. Their eyes glared : they were seized with a convulsion of rage ; and their writhing arms, clenched fists, half-stifled curses and gnashing teeth evinced the maddened violence of their feelings. The account is more like a description of wild beasts than of an assembly of sages, patriots, or men of the world. But it may be observed, that in proportion to a savage or half-civilized state, the hateful passions and the expression of them are usually predominant ; and their credulity and terror are also naturally excited against any supposed violence or wrong meditated by others from their knowledge (the only knowledge they have) of what they themselves are in the hourly habit of suffering or inflicting. Passion, however, from whatever cause, is always energetic, often generous ; and nothing makes us sooner forget ourselves than our dread or hatred of others. The president of this meeting (the Stock-Exchange of Moscow) put down his name for fifty thousand roubles, half his fortune ; and the rest followed the example.

In the mean time, Smolensk had fallen ; Wiazma was in the hands of Napoleon, and terror prevailed at Moscow. The governor-general Count Rostopchin sent out a number of lying proclamations of the deplorable state of the French army and of the triumphant resistance made by Kutusof, and indeed had hopes of this resistance to the last ; but in secret he ordered the preparation of an immense quantity of fuses and various other combustible materials. His intention was to convert Moscow itself (if necessary) into a grand infernal machine to blow up Napoleon and his whole army ; or if that should fail, it would deprive them of their expected asylum and resources, and the odium of the act, easily turned upon the French, must rouse the whole population of Russia to vengeance. Such was the scheme planned in silence, carried on with indefatigable perseverance and secrecy, and executed without misgiving and without remorse. There was prodigious, almost inconceivable grandeur in the act, if great sacrifices and great results constitute grandeur. It had the Spartan character. It is the most stupendous violation on record of the precept, ' Not to do evil that good may come.' It took the greatest responsibility upon itself, and implied the greatest strength of purpose. It was heroic, disinterested, the *ideal* of a barbaric virtue, namely, of that which despairing of good as its habitual aim, hardens itself against evil, and considers in any act only the ultimate end and its own resolution and power to accomplish it. Had his country been worth saving, the Russian could not have taken these means to save it ; but certainly there was no other way. A capital can be burned only in that despotic and uncivilized state of society, where the habitations of men are no more regarded than the stalls of cattle, and the owners as little consulted in the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

demolition of them. There is only one parallel to this case in all history; and that is the attempt of Guy Faux to blow up the English king and parliament. The one was the fanaticism of religion, the other of patriotism. Both shew equal audacity, equal self-reliance, equal deliberation; Guy Faux gave the strongest pledge of his sincerity, for his life was to have been the forfeit of his success. He failed, and was hanged and has been made into a national scarecrow ever since. Count Rostopchin succeeded, and has been canonized by the French historians. They praise him; why do they not imitate him?—The whole design was carried into effect very methodically and without an appearance of effort. The women had notice to quit the city first; then the priests and infirm went forth in solemn procession; then the nobles and attendants carrying away their wealth; then the citizens and workmen removing their provisions. Many however remained till Kutusof's army had passed through, without giving battle as he had promised; for the diamonds of ladies of quality were left in the hurry on their toilettes. The last act previous to the catastrophe was to throw open the prisons. A squalid and disgusting crew issued tumultuously forth. Two individuals, a Russian and a Frenchman, accused of treason or some political offence, were dragged before Rostopchin. The Russian, the son of a merchant, had been taken in the act of stirring up the people to revolt; and what was worse, was discovered to be a member of a sect of German *illuminati*, called Martinists, so that the doctrines of equality had penetrated even into Russia. While his examination was going on, his father arrived in haste. Every one expected him to intercede for his son; but instead of doing so, he loudly demanded his execution. The governor allowed him a few moments to speak to him for the last time and give him his blessing. 'I bless the traitor!' said the maddened Russian; and at the same time turning to his son, he cursed him in a tone and with gestures calculated to inspire the deepest horror. This was the signal for execution. The unhappy victim was struck by a sabre; but the blow only staggered him, the enraged multitude rushed upon him and tore him to pieces. It is no wonder Mr. Canning exclaimed at the time that 'he was glad the first successful resistance to France had been made by a rude and enslaved country.' If the encroachments of liberty had been stopped by the spirit of liberty, his frantic and Gothic triumph would not have been complete. These were the sort of allies worthy of him and his cause—whom he and his friends, having in vain ransacked the centre of civilized Europe in search of them, had at last stirred up at the two extremities of bigotry and barbarism! The Frenchman whose fate remained to be disposed of was almost petrified with terror, when Rostopchin turning towards him said, 'As for you who are a Frenchman, it was natural for you to desire the arrival of the French: you are

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

therefore discharged; forget not, however, to tell your countrymen that Russia had but one traitor, who has met with his deserts.' The lesson could not be addressed to a people who stood more in need of it, and who seemed to think it incumbent on them in their admiration of the spirit shewn by Russia to furnish as many examples as possible of the direct contrary. He then addressed the banditti around him, calling them the children of Russia, who must atone for their past offences by serving their country, assigned them their several tasks, and left the city to its fate.

Buonaparte reckons that a hundred thousand of the inhabitants, driven out of Moscow, perished in the woods in the neighbourhood for want of food and shelter. Just before the evacuation of the city, while the people in despair were prostrating themselves before their public altars or the images of their saints in the private habitations, their ears suddenly caught the sounds of shouting and acclamations. They instantly ran into the streets and squares to learn the cause. Here were found multitudes of men and women gazing with eagerness and transport upon the cross of the principal church. A vulture was observed to have entangled himself in the chains which supported it, and remained suspended in them. This was hailed as a decisive and cheering omen by a people whose natural superstition was heightened by the momentousness of the crisis. In the same manner as the vulture, was God going to deliver Napoleon into their hands. What can subdue a nation who can be thus easily deluded by the grossest appearances, and whose whole physical strength, to inflict or to endure, can be wielded mechanically and in mass in proportion to their want of understanding? Certainly, ignorance is power.

CHAPTER XLVII

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

NAPOLÉON returned to the Kremlin through the camps of his army, which exhibited a very singular appearance, being situated in the midst of fields, in a thick and cold mire, and containing immense fires fed by rich mahogany furniture and gilded sashes and doors. Around these fires, with a litter of damp straw, sheltered only by a few miserable planks fastened together, his soldiers with their officers were to be seen, splashed with dirt and stained with smoke, seated upon superb arm-chairs, or reclining on sofas covered with silk. At their feet, carelessly opened or thrown on heaps, lay Cachemire shawls, the finest furs of

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Siberia, the gold-stuffs of Persia, and plates of solid silver, from which they had nothing to eat but a black dough baked in ashes, and half-broiled and bloodysteaks of horse-flesh. Between the camps and the city were met numerous parties of soldiers, dragging their plunder along with them, or driving before them, like so many beasts of burden, a number of the inhabitants bending under the pillage of their capital. The fire had forced nearly twenty thousand such persons from their hiding-places, who were very humanely treated by the French; as well as about ten thousand Russian prisoners, who were allowed to wander up and down at random, to share their fires or their plunder with them. When the marauding ceased, they soon joined their comrades. The Russians are *better haters* than the French.

The pillaging had commenced to a great extent: the chiefs were obliged to shut their eyes to it. Indeed, after what had happened, to forbid it would have been ridiculous punctilio. The Emperor was stopped in his way by troops of marauders, by groups of soldiers collected near the steps leading to cellars or the doors of palaces or shops, by heaps of furniture, or by stalls raised in the streets and market-places, where the soldiers were exchanging shewy and valuable commodities for common necessaries, and rich wines, liqueurs, and bales of merchandise for a loaf of bread. Through such a scene of havoc and confusion Napoleon re-entered Moscow. He had permitted this licence, thinking it justifiable, and that it might lead to useful discoveries; but when he found that the excesses increased, that the Old Guard had been hurried into them, and that the Russian peasants, who had begun to bring in provisions, were prevented by fear, he issued severe orders, commanded his Guard to keep close to their quarters, and at the first word he was obeyed.

In the meantime, Kutusof had drawn Murat after him towards Kolomna, as far as the spot where the Moskwa divides the road to it. Here, under favour of the night, he turned suddenly to the south, in order to place himself, by way of Podol, between Moscow and Kalouga. This nocturnal march of the Russians shewed them their capital in flames, and kindled all their rage against the French as the authors of what they themselves had done. Kutusof was the first to announce the event to Alexander, who was not staggered by it, but vowed redoubled energy and perseverance on hearing it. Indeed he is supposed to have been no stranger to the design beforehand. In consequence of Kutusof's shifting and circuitous march, Murat lost all traces of him for three days. The Russian advanced-guard had nearly arrived at Woronowo, belonging to Count Rostopchin, when they were met by the governor, who had been setting fire to that fine seat, and would not suffer it to be extinguished. The French afterwards shuddered to find an inscription

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

on the iron-gate of the church, which was still standing, purporting that such should be the fate of every thing in an invaded country, sooner than it should fall into the hands of the enemy. The moral was perhaps good: but if so, I see no reason why Russia or Count Rostopchin should make a monopoly of it. Would Count Rostopchin extend it to Poland, to France, or any other country but Russia? Otherwise, his phrenzy was that of a beast of prey, that foams with rage and impatience after scouring the forest, at being pursued to its den. The 'sacred rage' of right is quite another thing. The Count himself afterwards went to Paris in the track of an invading army. But it is said neither he nor his sovereign took vengeance by setting fire to that capital. This is true; but the lords of the earth had just then glutted themselves with a prey that took away all appetite for every other—which was no less than the rights and liberties of the whole human race. It is no wonder they were 'mild as kings on their *second* coronation-day!' ¹ Near this spot Murat came up with Kutusof, and had a smart skirmish with him on the 29th of September, near Czerikowo, and another with Miloradowitch on the 4th of October near Winkowo. He was hardly pressed on the latter occasion, and was going to apply for a suspension of arms; but Poniatowski just then coming up, he fought on and repulsed Miloradowitch.

The report of each of these affairs had nearly drawn Napoleon into the field. He had written out the orders to march; but twice he burnt them, and seemed still to wait for an answer from Petersburg. He then fed his hopes with the recollections of Tilsit and Erfurt. Nor was that all. He could not make up his mind to suspect the pit-fall prepared for him till it actually opened. Hitherto he had been uniformly fortunate: the certainty of failure must be as great as that of his success, before he could believe in it. His was indeed a trying situation, with the superstructure of his power and greatness still standing around him, and the foundations crumbling beneath his feet. To dare had been with him so far to conquer, and that in proportion to the imminence of the danger and difficulty. Should he be wanting to himself now; or be the first to dissolve that spell which genius and fortune had bound around him, and which nothing but equally sad and unforeseen reverses could undo? His mind also possessed a hidden advantage (without which he could not have been the man he was)—that of employing itself at pleasure on whatever object demanded his attention, and making his will predominate over real or imaginary ills. This faculty, however necessary, may also turn to mischievous account;

¹ When Buonaparte put the crown on his own head, he virtually uncrowned every one of them. This was the hateful point always at issue. With this clue all is clear; without it, all is a disjointed dream.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

since truth, by which action must be regulated, is not a voluntary thing ! —Paris at this crisis drew off his thoughts from Petersburg. The accumulated affairs which required his care, and the couriers who arrived during the first days of his residence at Moscow in quick succession, greatly assisted in enabling him to bear his suspense. But the promptitude and ease with which he transacted business had soon exhausted this resource ; and shortly after, the messengers were intercepted. The military posts established in four cities which had been reduced to ashes, were found insufficient to protect a route of ninety-three leagues. All this while, no answer had arrived from Alexander. Napoleon's uneasiness increased, and the means of diverting it diminished. The activity of his mind, accustomed to the superintendence of nearly the whole of Europe, had now no other object than the regulation of a hundred thousand men ; and indeed, so perfect was the organisation of his army, that it was scarcely a matter of business to him. Every thing relating to it was arranged and methodised. He was surrounded by ministers who could inform him instantly and at any hour of the day of the position of every individual in it, whether in the morning or evening, whether alone or in company, whether with the regiment, at the hospital, on furlough, or however otherwise disposed of : and this with accuracy all the way from Paris to Moscow. So admirable was the system at that time in force ; and so precise and strict was the chief in exacting obedience to it !

At this period all his proceedings were calculated to persuade the Russians that their formidable enemy meant to establish himself in the heart of their empire. Moscow, although reduced to ashes, received an intendant and municipality. Orders were issued to lay in a stock of provisions for the winter. A theatre was formed in the midst of the ruins. The principal actors of Paris were sent for to perform in it. An Italian singer attempted to revive at the Kremlin the evening entertainments of the Thuilleries. By these indications, it is said, Napoleon wished to mislead a government which by the long habitude of ruling a nation immersed in ignorance and error, was more than his match in the arts of deception. The month of September had, however, passed ; and Alexander had not deigned a reply. It was an affront ; and Napoleon felt hurt and irritated. On the 3rd of October, he sent for his marshals. As soon as he saw them, he said, ' Come in, and hear the new plan which I have just formed. Prince Eugene, do you read it ! They must burn what yet remained of Moscow, and march by way of Twer upon Petersburg, where Macdonald would come to join them : Murat and Davoust should form the rear-guard.' The blank countenances of the generals, however, disclosed their disapprobation ; they objected the bad roads and the lateness of the season ; and the plan, if

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Buonaparte ever seriously entertained it, was given up. If the blow could have been aimed sooner, it was the only thing likely to strike a panic and rouse the inertness of Alexander; it was the only way in which they could do more than they had already done; and it might possibly have been thought too much to sacrifice two capitals to the inviolate pretensions of the empire, and to a relish for English subsidies. Napoleon then proposed to send Caulaincourt, who was a favourite with Alexander, on a mission to him; but this officer declined the offer, saying he should fail in it from want of confidence in the result; to which the Emperor replied, 'Well then, I will send Lauriston.'

Lauriston repaired with a letter for Alexander to the Russian advanced-posts on the 15th of October, where he had some difficulty in meeting with Kutusof, who said he had no authority to let him proceed, but that he would forward the letter. Meantime an armistice was proclaimed; and Murat, who got into the enemy's camp, was flattered by his friends the Cossack chiefs, who even talked of 'making him their king!' Buonaparte did not admire this coquetting; and wished the armistice to be broken off, the terms of which were wholly against the French and in favour of the Russians. Murat himself at last began to feel uneasy. At the casual meetings between the French and Russian officers, though the latter shewed a great deal of outward politeness and a conciliating manner, there was an under-tone in their conversation that was anything but pacific. They pointed to 'those horses, still wild-looking and scarcely broken in, and whose long manes swept the dust of the plain. Did not that sufficiently prove that a numerous cavalry was reaching them from the remotest quarters, while the French was hastening to total decay?' They then spoke of the severity of the winter. 'Within a fortnight,' they said, 'your nails will fall off, and your weapons drop from your benumbed and lifeless hands.' The Cossacks, too, mixed in the discourse, using the style of an Eastern apologue. They asked the French, 'If they had not corn and air and graves enough, in a word, room enough to live and die in their own country? If so, why did they roam so far from home, and come to fatten a foreign soil with their blood? Such conduct was an act of robbery to their native country: to that they owed, while living, the cultivation, defence, and embellishment of it; and in death, they owed it that body which they had derived from it and had nourished by it, and from which in turn it might derive nourishment itself!' These hints, as well as the language in which they were conveyed, must have been not a little startling to the French. But had these men just risen out of the ground (to which they belonged), that they supposed their own countrymen had never wandered out of their own bounds; that the French could remain perfectly quiet and unmolested within their

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

own territory, if they chose : or that they themselves might not visit France a short time after, without leaving their bones there, as would have been but just by their own reasoning ?

The Emperor was made acquainted with these suggestions and warnings ; but he constantly discountenanced and repelled them. His uneasiness sometimes vented itself in sharp reproofs and sallies of impatience. He did not brook the Guerilla war, which the Cossacks were carrying on around him during a pretended truce. A hundred and fifty dragoons had been surprised and their commander taken prisoner by these roving bands : two large convoys had been seized, and Vereia was taken by armed peasants. He rode out in the mornings, and spent a part of the evenings in the society of Count Daru, to whom almost alone he admitted the precariousness of his situation. ‘ Some men,’ he observed, ‘ conceived he had nothing to do but to march, not considering that a month was requisite to recruit his army and give time for the evacuation of his hospitals ; and that if he abandoned his wounded, the Cossacks would exercise daily cruelties over the sick and stragglers, and his march would carry the appearance of a flight. That word would resound from one end of Europe to the other, which, full of envy at his success, would, after the first retrograde movement, never rest satisfied with any thing short of his absolute ruin.’ He occupied himself, however, in collecting all the trophies which could be found in Moscow ; and great pains were taken to detach the gigantic cross from the tower of the Great Ivan. He intended to adorn the dome of the Invalids with it. With the possession of this monument a Russian superstition connected the salvation of the empire ; and a vast flight of ravens continually hovered over it while it was removing. Napoleon had constant disputes with Count Lobau concerning the army-returns, which he would by no means have made less than they had been. The army indeed still presented a noble and imposing appearance. They kept up their spirits, their discipline to the last ; and prided themselves when on parade and under Napoleon’s eye, so far from home and after so many difficulties, in the neatness of their dress and the polish of their arms. He was confounded and astonished at the silence and obstinacy of Alexander, which, with the destruction of Moscow, he thought would bring on a convulsion and shake his throne. This, it appeared, was judging of things too much by a common-place standard. It is said that at this period he grew pale with constant and suppressed anxiety, that he sat longer at his meals than usual, and amused himself of an evening in discussing the merits of some new verses just arrived from Paris, or in completing a system of regulations for the *Comédie Française*.

In the midst of these distractions and amusements, suddenly came on

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

the first fall of snow, and with it fell to the ground all those flattering illusions which he had till then cherished.¹ He then thought only of retreat, without, however, even now uttering the obnoxious term and without any one's being able to wrest a positive order announcing it from him. He merely said that in the course of twenty days it would be necessary for the army to be in winter-quarters; and he also urged forward the departure of the wounded. He told those about him that 'he was going to march upon Kutusof, to crush or remove him out of the way, and then to turn suddenly towards Smolensk.' But his officers who had hitherto pressed his departure and who seemed to have no other principle than to dissent from whatever he proposed, now objected to it and advised him to stay in Moscow, where they could have salt and bread, procure the rest by an extensive system of forage, bury themselves in the cellars of the houses, and in the spring issue forth to complete their conquest. Buonaparte replied that 'this was the counsel of a lion: but what would Paris say? What might be going on there, while all intercourse was barred for six months?' So little could he rely on this people, who deserve to be always kept (as they seem at present always likely to be) in a state of pupilage. Soon after a Cossack fired at Murat, which broke off the armistice; and while Napoleon was reviewing the divisions of Ney in the first court of the Kremlin, there was a report of a cannonading near Winkowo. Duroc resolved to inform him of it. The Emperor for a moment changed colour, but instantly recovered himself and proceeded in his review. An aide-de-camp, the younger Beranger, now arrived, and hastened up to the Emperor. He announced that Murat's troops had been surprised and defeated with great loss and that he himself was wounded. He had only been able to rescue the remains of his advanced-guard by reiterated charges against the numerous troops who already occupied the high-road behind him, which was his sole retreat. Honour had, however, been saved. The attack in front conducted by Kutusof had been faint: Poniatowski, some leagues to the right, had resisted gloriously. Murat and his carbineers, by efforts more than human, had checked Bagawout who had been on the point of breaking through the left flank: they had restored the chances of the battle. Claparede and Latour-Maubourg had cleared the defile of Spaskapia, of which Platof had just gained possession two leagues in the rear of the French line. Two Russian generals had been killed; the loss of the enemy had been considerable, but they retained their title to the victory. Such had been the recommencement of the war. This was on the 18th of October. Napoleon

¹ The almanacks for the last forty years had been carefully consulted; and the winter set-in this year a fortnight or three weeks sooner than it had almost ever been known to do.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

on receiving this intelligence recovered all the fire of his earlier years. A thousand orders, some resulting from a general view of the case, others reaching to its minutest details, all different, yet all in conformity and all necessary, burst at once from his lips; and before night, his whole army was in motion towards Woronowo. Broussier was to take the direction of Fominskoe, and Poniatowski that towards Medyn. The Emperor himself, before day-break on the 19th of October, quitted Moscow, and exclaimed, 'Let us march upon Kalouga; and woe be to those whom I may meet with on my passage!'

There are two roads leading southward from Moscow to Kalouga; the old and the new. It was upon the former that Kutusof had just beaten Murat. By this same road Napoleon set out, announcing to his officers that he was going to regain the frontiers of Poland by Kalouga, Medyn, Inknowo, Elnia, and Smolensk: then pointing to a sky, still without a cloud, he asked them, 'Whether in that brilliant sun they did not recognise his protecting planet?' But this appeal to his fortune hardly corresponded with the expression of his countenance. Napoleon, who had entered Moscow with ninety thousand effective men and twenty thousand sick and wounded, quitted it with more than a hundred thousand effective men. He left only twelve hundred sick. His stay, notwithstanding his daily losses, had enabled him to rest his infantry, to complete his stock of ammunition, to increase his force by ten thousand men, and to watch over the recovery or the retreat of the greater part of his wounded. The cavalry and the artillery were not in so good a condition as he wished. From the preceding evening, the army had been moving out of Moscow without interruption. In this column of a hundred and forty thousand men, and nearly fifty thousand horses, of every description, a hundred thousand effective troops marching at the head, with their knapsacks and their arms, with above five hundred and fifty field-pieces and two thousand artillery waggons, still bore that character of terrible and warlike array which became the victors of the world! But the remainder, which bore too great a proportion, resembled a horde of Tartars after a successful invasion. It consisted of three or four almost endless files, of a confused assemblage of calashes, *caissons*, elegant carriages, and waggons and carts of every description. Here were seen the trophies of Russia, Turkish, and Persian flags, and the gigantic cross of Ivan the Great; there, bearded Russian peasants, driving or carrying the booty, of which they themselves formed part; at other times soldiers dragging along by main force wheelbarrows filled with every thing they could collect; crowds of recruits of all nations without uniform; valets swearing in every language, and urging on, by blows and shouts, ponies harnessed with ropes to sumptuous carriages; a number of French women and

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

children, that had been settled in Moscow, flying from the rage of the Muscovites, and a few Russian girls, voluntary captives. In spite of the width of the road, and the calls of his escort, the Emperor slowly made his way through this vast multitude : but a narrow pass, a forced march, or a skirmish with a troop of Cossacks would too soon rid him of this incumbrance.

Napoleon pushed on for several hours on the old road : but having halted in the middle of the day near the castle of Krasno-pachra, he turned suddenly to the right, and with difficulty gained the new road to Kalouga, which place he might reach in one day's march, before Kutusof could get there, who was still expecting him on the old road, where Ney's and Murat's troops had been left to mask his movements. On the 23rd of October, the Imperial head-quarters were at Borowsk. This night was one of satisfaction to the Emperor, as he had just learnt that Delzons and his division were in possession of Malo-Jaroslawetz, four leagues in advance, and the only point where Kutusof could cut him off from the new road to Kalouga. The Emperor was at first determined to secure the place in person, but hesitated all the next day (for no assignable reason, except a reluctance to act from motives of safety in one who had never acted but from motives of glory and a sense of superiority), and the next night heard to his extreme annoyance the sounds of an engagement, which proved that the Russians disputed the passage with Delzons. The latter had not gone into the town, which stands on a declivity with a wood and a large plain beyond, and a river below. His bivouacs had been surprised at four in the morning by Doctorof and his troops. Prince Eugene heard the firing at three leagues' distance, and hastened to his relief. As he drew near, a vast moving amphitheatre rose before him : the river Louja marked its foot ; from the opposite height a cloud of Russian sharp-shooters and their artillery poured down their fire on Delzons. On the plain beyond, Kutusof's whole army advanced rapidly by the Lectazowo road. A severe and desperate conflict ensued. Delzons and his brother were killed. The French maintained their ground by the judicious manœuvres of Guilleminet, who threw a hundred grenadiers into a churchyard, in the walls of which they made holes for their musquets. Five times the Russians attempted to pass, and five times they were thrown into disorder and repulsed by a well-directed and murderous fire. The whole day the battle wavered ; the fourteenth and fifteenth divisions (the last composed of Italian recruits) contending against the increasing numbers of the Russians, who at length descended to the bridge, thinking to carry it, and cut off all retreat. Prince Eugene was reduced to his last reserve ; he came into action himself, and by his calls and example rallying his men, the battle was once more carried up the heights ;

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and the Russians tired out, fell back and concentrated themselves on the Kalouga road, between the woods and Malo-Jaroslavetz. Thus did eighteen thousand French and Italians, huddled together in the bottom of a ravine, defeat fifty thousand Russians placed above their heads, and seconded by all the advantages which a town built on a steep declivity could present. Their loss, however, was great, and in the circumstances, doubly felt.

The Emperor received the report of this battle in a weaver's hut, a few steps to the right of the high road, on the borders of the rivulet and village of Ghorodinia, and about half a league from Malo-Jaroslavetz. In this half-finished hovel, in a dark and comfortless chamber, divided in two by a tattered cloth, the fate of the army and of Europe was to be decided. The fatal blow was struck, by which all was put to hazard, lost, or to do again. The early part of the night was passed in collecting intelligence. Bessieres had been sent to examine the Russian position, and reported it unassailable. 'Did you see rightly?' said the Emperor? 'Are you sure? Will you answer for this?' Bessieres repeating his assertion, Napoleon crossed his arms with an air of consternation; his head fell on his breast, and he seemed lost in his own reflections. It is supposed that he reproached himself with having been anticipated by Kutusof. He is indeed charged with having moved slow on this march. It is no wonder; since he dragged his falling fortunes—that mighty ruin—after him! He could hardly, however, make this excuse to himself. He lay down and rose up incessantly; called for his attendants; yet not a syllable betrayed his distress. The agitation of his body alone proved the tempest which tossed his mind. About four o'clock in the morning, Prince D'Aremberg came to inform him that some Cossacks, under cover of the night and of the woods, were gliding between him and his advanced posts. He disregarded the intelligence, and as soon as the sun was visible above the horizon, mounted his horse, and proceeded towards Malo-Jaroslavetz. In crossing the plain, a confused clamour arose; and of a sudden Platof, with his Cossacks, mixed with the baggage of the army, and overturning every thing in their course, came on with one of their hourras, which was at first taken for cries of '*Vive l'Empereur!*' Rapp had only time to say, 'It is they; turn back;' and, seizing the bridle of his horse, urged the Emperor to retire. Napoleon's pride could not stoop to this. He put his hand on his sword; Berthier and the grand Equerry did the same; and placing themselves on the left of the wood, they waited the approach of this wild horde. They were only forty paces off; and Rapp was wounded by the foremost of them. The courage of about twenty officers and chasseurs, with the eagerness of the barbarians for plunder, saved the Emperor; the cavalry of the Guard coming up, put an end to the

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

affair, and the Cossacks fled, leaving their booty behind them. The Emperor, amazed at the audacity of this attack, halted till the plain was cleared, and then went forward to Malo-Jaroslavetz, when the Viceroy retraced the action of the day before. Never was a field of battle more terribly eloquent ! The glory of it most struck the Emperor, 'which,' he said, 'belonged wholly to Prince Eugene.' He then advanced into the plain above. After carefully examining its openings, and seeing the road to Kalouga closed against him by Kutusof and a hundred and twenty thousand men, that to Medyn by Platof and ten thousand horse, he returned slow and thoughtful to his headquarters.

Murat, Prince Eugene, Berthier, Davoust, and Bessieres followed him. As ill luck would have it, the miserable dwelling of an obscure artisan gave shelter to an emperor, two kings, and three generals. Napoleon was seated before a table ; his head resting on his hands, which concealed his features. 'The question was, whether they should march upon Smolensk by way of Kalouga, Medyn, or Mojaïsk ? Murat was the first to break silence, and proposed to pursue their route to Kalouga, and cut his way through the Russians, whom he despised. This advice was checked by Napoleon as too violent, and Bessieres seconded him. Davoust recommended to proceed to Medyn, and this brought on an altercation between him and Murat. The speakers were growing warm, when Napoleon dissolved the council by saying, 'It is well, Sirs ; I will decide.' He decided to retreat, and by the road which led him most speedily from the enemy ; but it cost him a dreadful effort to give an order so new to him.¹ The report of another skirmish with the Cossacks near Borowsk, is said to have been the last motive that induced him to what proved so fatal a course. What is most remarkable is, that he ordered this retreat to the north, at the very moment that Kutusof and his Russians, weakened by the shock they had received at Malo-Jaroslavetz, were retiring on the south, contrary to the advice of Sir Robert Wilson. Kutusof, in spite of all that this knight-errant could say, had had enough of Napoleon, and was determined to let the winter do the rest. Had the French Emperor known his resolution, he might have fallen upon his troops as they crowded together in disorder to the bridge over the Oka ; or he might himself have effected his retreat by

¹ He is said on this occasion to have lost the use of his senses. It is a pity the accounts in Segur (otherwise so interesting) cannot be implicitly depended upon ; but they have an evident bias, and are tinged by a constant ambition of fine writing and effect. For instance, it is asserted, in describing the interview just mentioned, that 'the Emperor remained motionless, absorbed, and apparently insensible to all that passed :' when a little before a speech is put into his mouth in answer to Murat, and another into that of Bessieres, which the Emperor is said to 'have approved by his silence.'—Vol. ii. p. 110.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Medyn, in a straight line and unmolested; and then all might have turned out well.

It was on the 26th of October that the retreat by Mojaïsk commenced. Davoust, with twenty-five thousand men, was to form the rear-guard. The troops marched with their eyes on the ground, ashamed and humbled. In the midst of them, their leader in thoughtful silence seemed anxiously to measure his line of communication with the fortresses on the Vistula. In that interval, he had only two resting-places, Smolensk and Minsk. Wittgenstein, at Polotsk, threatened the first; Tchitchakof, who had reached Breskhitowsky, the second. But he reckoned much on the Duke of Belluno and his thirty-six thousand fresh troops, stationed at Smolensk, in conjunction with whom, with St. Cyr and Macdonald, he might recover his former position on the Dwina and Boristhenes, keep Wittgenstein in check, stop the progress of Kutusof, and menace Alexander in his second capital. He might halt therefore either at Smolensk or at Minsk, a hundred leagues farther on, where Dombrowski with his Poles near Bobruisk, and Schwartzenburg at the head of fifty thousand Austrians at Breskhitowsky, would be able to hold Tchitchakof in check, and re-establish his connection with France. On the Emperor's arrival at Vereia, he met Mortier. He had executed his orders to blow up the Kremlin. A number of Cossacks and boors who after his departure entered it to plunder perished with it. On the 23rd of October, at half-past one in the morning, the air was shook by this terrible explosion; and both armies, though familiar to strange and appalling sounds, were awed by it. The earth trembled under Mortier's steps, as he drew off his troops. The Emperor heard it ten leagues farther off at Femenskoi, and announced the event to Europe in a tone of defiance and insult. 'The Kremlin had ceased to exist; and he had left all that remained of Moscow as a den for robbers and beggars.' Mortier, by Napoleon's special directions, had brought away as many of the wounded as he could. He also brought with him a prisoner, Count Winzingerode, who had rushed into the Kremlin at the head of a band of Cossacks; and finding himself surrounded, waved his handkerchief in the air, and pretended to come as a flag-of-truce. As he was a German by birth, Napoleon treated him harshly; but showed considerable kindness to Count Narischkin, his aide-de-camp, who was a Russian. Berthier had written to Kutusof on the 19th to carry on hostilities on a less savage plan, and to spare the towns. His answer was, that 'he could not restrain the patriotism of the Russians.' From this time Napoleon retaliated, and burnt all the towns in his rear. Borowsk and Vereia were the first that shared this fate.

On the 28th, the French army re-entered Mojaïsk. The town was filled with a number of wounded. They were here only three days'

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

march from Moscow ; but Napoleon's spirits revived at finding himself on this well-known road, where in the evening he received intelligence which alarmed him, that the whole Russian army was marching by Medyn upon Wiazma. He immediately ordered his Guard forward to Gjatzt, to secure that point. Winter had now set in, and added to the gloom of every thing around. A few leagues from Mojaisk, they had to cross the Kalouga, which is a mere brook ; but they were stopped for want of a bridge over it, which a couple of trees and a few planks would have remedied. The Emperor shrugged his shoulders ; and Berthier, whose business it was to attend to the circumstance, replied by an air of silent resignation. A little farther on, the army was marching in a profound silence, when some of the foremost raising their eyes, uttered a cry of consternation. They saw the earth trodden, the trees cut to stumps ; and beyond were broken hillocks, containing the most hideous spectacle, fragments of armour and drums, with half-devoured bodies and skeletons. It was the terrible redoubt, where so many brave men had fallen. A murmur ran through the ranks : 'It is the field of the great battle !' The Emperor hurried by ; nobody stopped ; for pressed by hunger, cold, and the enemy, they could only turn their heads to give a last glance at the unsheltered burial-place of their old companions in arms, whom they were leaving forever. But glory and liberty, be it said, were their bedfellows ; and *there* not only they, but the whole human race surrendered up their moral being and their vital breath, and can only henceforward as in a charnel-house drag out a mutilated and dishonoured existence—bodies without a living soul, the forms without the free-born spirit of men ! A fit inscription for that ghastly spot would make mad the survivors, and set free the world.—The army was moving on in sedate and silent meditation past this field, when one of the victims of the bloody day was, it is said, perceived to be still living, and piercing the air with his cries. But this is too horrible to be believed or dwelt on. Farther on, they came to the great abbey or hospital of Kolotskoi. At Borodino, the struggle was over ; here it was continued, and Death inflicted lingering tortures on his destined prey. The care of the surgeons and the love of life preserved many, who when they found the army repassing, crawled to the threshold, and held out their hands in agonizing supplication. The Emperor gave orders that every carriage of whatever description should receive one of these unhappy sufferers, and that the weakest, as had been done at Moscow, should be left under the protection of wounded Russians, whom the French had cured. He stopped to see the order executed. The sutlers whose carts received the wounded are said to have loitered behind, and thrown them into the ditches ; and on the evening of this long day's march, as the Imperial column approached Gjatzt, they found

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the road strewn with the bodies of a number of Russian prisoners, who were under the guard of some Portuguese and Poles. At this last atrocity the Emperor observed a gloomy silence, but nothing of the kind happened again.

The Emperor reached Wiazma in two days' march from Gjatz. Here he halted for the arrival of Prince Eugene and Davoust; and to reconnoitre the road from Medyn and Juknof. Hearing no tidings of the Russians, he set off after thirty-six hours' stay, leaving Ney at Wiazma to relieve Davoust, who was accused of dilatoriness; but he said that the artillery and waggons were constantly precipitated into deep ravines which crossed the road, and that it was nearly impossible to drag them up the opposite icy slope, the horses' shoes not having been turned. Nevertheless, both he and the Viceroy arrived within two leagues of Wiazma on the 2d of November, and might have passed through it; but neglecting to do so, the Russian advanced-guard under Miloradowitch (called the Russian Murat) turned their bivouacs in the night, and posted themselves along the left of the road, between the French generals and Wiazma. On the 3rd of November, Prince Eugene was preparing to take the road to that town, when the first dawn of day shewed him his situation, his rear-guard cut off, and Ney, who was to have come to his assistance, fighting in his own defence in the direction of Wiazma. He immediately took his resolution. He stopped, faced about, formed in line along the main road, and kept the foremost of the enemy's troops in check, till Ney marched up one of his regiments, and attacking them in the rear compelled them to retire. At the same time, Compans, one of Davoust's generals, joined his division to the Italian guard; and while they fought together, Davoust passed, and got between Wiazma and the Russians. The battle was not over, but begun. The French amounted to thirty thousand, but were in great disorder. The Russian artillery, superior in numbers, advanced at a gallop, and mowed down their lines. Davoust and his generals were still surrounded with many of their bravest men. Several of the officers who had been wounded at the Moskwa were still seen, one with his arm in a sling, another with his head covered with bandages, encouraging the soldiers, keeping them together, throwing themselves upon the enemy's field-pieces and seizing them, and thus preventing the effects of bad example by good. Miloradowitch saw that his prey would escape him, and sent the Englishman Wilson to summon Kutusof to his aid; but the old general laughed at him. The fight had already lasted seven hours; when, night approaching, the French began to retire. This retrograde movement encouraged the enemy; and had it not been for a signal effort of the 25th, 27th, and 85th regiments, Davoust's corps would have been turned, broken and destroyed. Prince Eugene

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

made good his retreat to Wiazma ; Davoust followed, but Morand's division, which entered first, found a number of Russians there before them, and had to cut their way through them. Compans, who brought up the rear, put an end to the affair by facing about, and making a furious assault upon Miloradowitch. The bivouacs were set up by the light of the burning of Wiazma, and amidst repeated discharges of artillery. During the night the alarm continued. Several times the troops thought they were attacked, and groped about for their arms. On the following morning, when they returned to their ranks, they were astonished at the smallness of their numbers.

Nevertheless, the example of the chiefs and the hope of finding rest at Smolensk kept up the men's spirits. Besides, so far they had been cheered by the sight of the sun ; but on the 6th of November, the snow came on, and everything underwent a total change. The consequences were most disastrous. The troops marched on without knowing where, and without distinguishing any object ; and while they strove to force their way through the whirlwinds of sleet, the snow drifted in the cavities where they fell, and the weakest rose no more. The wind drove in their faces not only the falling snow, but that which it raised in furious eddies from the earth. The Muscovite winter attacked them in every part, penetrated through their thin dress and ragged shoes. Their wet clothes froze upon them ; this covering of ice chilled their bodies and stiffened all their limbs. A cutting and violent wind stopped their breath or seized upon it as it was exhaled, and converted it into icicles, which hung from their beards. The unhappy men crawled on with trembling limbs and chattering teeth till the snow, collecting round their feet in hard lumps, like stones, some scattered fragment, a branch of a tree, or the body of one of their companions, made them stagger and fall. Their cries and groans were vain : soon the snow covered them, and small hillocks marked where they lay ! Such was their sepulture. The road was filled with these undulations, like a burying-place. The most intrepid or obdurate were affected : they hurried past with averted eyes. But before them, around them, all was snow : the horizon seemed one vast winding-sheet, in which nature was enveloping the whole army. The only objects which came out from the bleak expanse were a few gloomy pines skirting the plain, and adding to the horror of the scene with their funereal green and the motionless erectness of their black trunks ! Even the weapons of the soldiers were a weight almost insupportable to their benumbed limbs. In their frequent falls they slipped out of their hands and were broken or lost in the snow. Many others had their fingers frozen on the musquet they still grasped. Some broke into parties ; others wandered on alone. If they dispersed themselves in the fields, or by the cross-paths,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in search of bread or a shelter for the night, they met nothing but Cosacks and an armed population, who surrounded, wounded, and stripped them, and left them with ferocious laughter to expire naked upon the snow. Then came the night of sixteen hours. But on this universal covering of snow, they knew not where to stop, where to sit, where to lie, where to find a few roots for food, or dry sticks to light their fires. At length fatigue, darkness, and repeated orders induced a pause, and they tried to establish themselves for the night; but the storm scattered the preparations for the bivouacs, and the branches of the pines covered with ice and snow only melted away, and resisted the attempts of the soldiers to kindle them into a blaze. When at length the fire got the better, officers and soldiers gathered round it, to cook their wretched meal of horse-flesh, and a few spoonfuls of rye mixed with snow-water. Next morning, circles of stiffened corpses marked the situation of the bivouacs, and the carcasses of thousands of horses were strewed round them. From this time disorder and distrust began to prevail. A few resisted the strong contagion of insubordination and despondency. These were the officers, the subalterns, and some of the soldiers, whom nothing could detach from their duty. They kept up each other's spirits by repeating the name of Smolensk, which they were approaching, and looked forward to as the end of their sufferings.

Nothing remarkable happened to the Imperial column between Gjatze and Mikalewska, a village between Dorogobouje and Smolensk, except that it was found necessary to throw the spoils of Moscow into the lake of Semlewo. Cannon, Gothic armour, the ornaments of the Kremlin, and the cross of the Great Ivan, all sunk at once. On the 3rd and 4th of November, Napoleon had stopped at Slawkowo. On the 4th, he slept at Dorogobouje. On the following day, the 6th of November, on the heights of Mikalewska, just as the snow was beginning to fall, an estafette brought the news of that strange conspiracy formed by Mallet (an obscure officer in a prison) to overturn the new government and dynasty. With half-a-dozen accomplices, and with no other means than a forged report of the death of Napoleon, he attempted with his own hand to arrest the minister, the prefect of police, and the commander of Paris, and to force them to dissolve the existing authorities and proclaim a republic. He had actually prevailed with some of these; and his plot only miscarried, it is said, through the spirit of one of the heads of a public office, who arrested Mallet, instead of being arrested by him. Really the French are a most theatrical people,

————— 'The rightest company
Of players that upon the world's stage be.' **DONNE**

The distinction between words and things can hardly be said to have

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

place in their minds. You have only to say a thing, and it is believed ; and they are ready to act upon this first impression, without inquiry or regard to consequences, as if in comparison with it ‘ the pillar’d firmament were rottenness, and earth’s base built on stubble.’ What should we think of any one who should attempt to make the doors of one of the prisons of London fly open by declaring that George IV. was dead, that the Duke of Clarence had refused to succeed him, and should proceed to summon the soldiers at the Tower or the Horse-Guards, with the commander-in-chief, to dissolve the two Houses of Parliament, and proclaim a Commonwealth ? In London, such a person would be instantly taken up as a madman : in Paris, it is still thought an even chance that Mallet’s conspiracy might have taken effect, had it gone a step further. The mere supposition of the possibility is enough.—Those who sought to read in Buonaparte’s countenance what he thought of this incident, sought in vain. His first and only words to Daru were, ‘ Well ; if we had stayed at Moscow ? ’ He then retired abruptly into a palisaded house, where he gave a loose to his repressed emotions in the presence of those most devoted to him. Some of them thought the Revolution of 1789 was beginning again ; others were glad of the circumstance, thinking it would in future keep him at home. So little did they apprehend the real danger ;—as if what was solid and inevitable repelled belief, and only what was most light and vain found a corresponding sympathy in their breasts !

The next day, the Emperor’s thoughts were called off from this subject by the arrival of one of Ney’s aide-de-camps. He had instructions to give an account of disasters, of which Napoleon knew enough already from deserters who were continually passing. When, therefore, the aide-de-camp (Dalbignac) was going to speak, he interrupted him with these words, ‘ Colonel, I don’t ask you for these details ! ’ Dalbignac was silent ; he felt that under circumstances so calamitous and now irremediable, every man stood in need of his whole stock of fortitude ; and that the Emperor feared the effect of complaints which could only weaken him who indulged in, and him who listened to them. He was struck with Napoleon’s deportment, the same that he maintained during the whole retreat—grave, silent, resigned : it was that of a man suffering less in body than others, but much more in mind, and submitting to his destiny. Just then, General Charpentier sent him some waggons loaded with provisions from Smolensk. Bessieres wanted to take possession of them for the Guard, but the Emperor sent them on immediately to the Prince of the Moskwa, saying that ‘ those who fought should eat before the rest.’ At the same time he begged that Ney would try to defend himself long enough to allow him some time at Smolensk, where the army would have food and rest and might be

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

reorganised. He did so, fighting the whole way, often with a musquet in his hand which had fallen from the benumbed fingers of the soldiers ; and entered the town on the 13th, together with Prince Eugene, who taking the road by Witepsk, had narrowly escaped drowning in the waters of the Wop, and had had to skirmish all the way with a rabble of hideous Cossacks. Colonel Ferenzac more particularly distinguished himself in this march.

Napoleon had reached Smolensk on the 9th, and found the place a scene of confusion. The army when they arrived at this promised termination of all their sufferings were kept for a long time outside the gates, in hopes to rally the stragglers : when they were admitted and applied for provisions they could not obtain them, having no tickets nor any officers to answer for the regiment to which they belonged. Instead of plenty, they found famine, instead of shelter only ruins ; their hope was turned to despair, and from this period may be dated the greatest excesses. When at length the provisions were given out, the soldiers refused to carry them to their regiments, darting upon the sacks, and snatching out a few handfuls of flour, which they ran to devour in a corner. It was the same with the brandy. The next day, the houses were filled with dead bodies. The Emperor shut himself up in one of the houses of the new square, nor did he leave it till the 14th, when he continued his retreat. He had reckoned upon finding fifteen days' provisions and forage for an army of a hundred thousand men : he did not find enough for half that number, and it consisted solely of flour, rice, and brandy. There was no meat at all. He was heard furiously upbraiding one of the men charged with provisioning the army. The Commissary only saved his life by a long and abject entreaty on his knees, or perhaps by shewing that in the circumstances he had done nearly all that was possible. The stragglers had consumed all they could lay hands on ; droves of cattle had died of cold on the road ; and the enemy had captured a number of convoys.

CHAPTER XLVIII

THE SAME SUBJECT

At Smolensk Buonaparte was twelve marches from Borisof, where Wittgenstein from the north and Tchitchakof from the south were trying to form a junction in the neighbourhood of Minsk, so as to cut off his retreat.

After the action of the 18th of August, which procured St. Cyr

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

the rank of Marshal, that general remained on the Russian bank of the Duna, in possession of Polotsk and an intrenched camp before it. During the two following months the war had been a mere affair of out-posts, but to the advantage of the Russians, and at the end of that period Wittgenstein's army amounted to fifty-two thousand men ; while the French was reduced to seventeen thousand, including the Bavarians or sixth corps. St. Cyr was fearful of being turned on his right by Wittgenstein and on his left by Steinheil who was advancing from Riga with two divisions of the army of Finland. St. Cyr wrote to Macdonald urging him to stop this army or to send him fifteen thousand men ; but Macdonald, suspecting the intention of Yorck to deliver up his park of siege-artillery to the Russians, refused on any account to stir from his post. In this situation the Russians became more daring every day ; and on the 17th of October, St. Cyr's advanced posts were driven in, and Wittgenstein gained possession of the outlets of the woods which surround Polotsk. On the following day, he attacked him with fury in his intrenchments ; yet, after an obstinate engagement, St. Cyr though wounded remained master of the field. On his left a body of Swiss and Croats, who had never been in action, rushed too impetuously forward, and were in danger of being overwhelmed by numbers ; they at length, however, disentangled themselves and repulsed the enemy. Thus fourteen thousand men, according to the French accounts, resisted fifty. St. Cyr slept tranquilly, not dreaming that Steinheil had crossed the Duna at Dryssa, and was ascending the left bank of that river with thirteen thousand men to attack him in his rear. On the 19th, Wittgenstein was observed with his troops under arms, regularly drawn up for an attack, for which, however, he seemed to want resolution to give the signal. St. Cyr was at a loss to account for this backwardness, when about ten in the morning an aide-de-camp arrived at full speed from the opposite bank of the river to announce that another hostile army was advancing on that side and driving the French cavalry before it. The rumour of this conflict filled the ranks of Wittgenstein with transport and the French camp with dismay. The cannon of Steinheil were distinctly heard. Already St. Cyr had detached three regiments to meet him, and began to point his batteries against the bridge over which he must pass : yet still Wittgenstein continued inactive. He seemed not contented with hearing Steinheil's fire, but determined to wait for his approach. His officers advised St. Cyr to an instant retreat, but he conceived that this would be only a signal for Wittgenstein to fall upon him with his whole force, and he thought it better to trust to the unaccountable torpor which had seized the Russians and to the chapter

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

of accidents. For three hours he stood in the most anxious suspense with his watch in his hand marking the decline of the sun, and hoping that Polotsk might be wrapped in darkness before the arrival of his new enemy. At length, when he was within half an hour's march of the bridge where he could bar St. Cyr from the only avenue by which he could escape from Wittgenstein, he halted. A thick fog at the same time came on, and concealed the three armies from each other's view. St. Cyr instantly began to cross the river, but some of the troops setting fire to their camp, gave the alarm to Wittgenstein, and a severe conflict ensued, before the French were able to make good their retreat. Steinheil heard it not, nor did he come to the assistance of his countrymen; and the next day, his communication with Wittgenstein having been cut off by destroying the bridge over the river, De Wrede with his Bavarians drove him several leagues into the woods from which he had issued, with the loss of a great number of his men.

St. Cyr having been wounded, it was proposed to choose another general; and De Wrede having offered himself and been rejected, and also piqued at no mention having been made of his name in the affair of the 18th of August, withdrew in disgust, and threw himself upon Klubokoe, a line which Napoleon had abandoned, and where he was completely useless. St. Cyr continued his retreat, covering the road from Orcha to Borisof; and on the 30th of October was joined by Victor with twenty-five thousand men at Smoliany, where Wittgenstein not knowing this increase of numbers, offered the French battle, which Victor unaccountably declined. Buonaparte was incensed when he learnt this circumstance on the 6th of November (the day he heard of Mallet's conspiracy) and sent orders to him to drive Wittgenstein, who hung upon his flanks at Witepsk, behind the Duna. Baraguay d'Hilliers had been completely defeated near Elnia, and the brigade Augereau taken prisoners, so that Kutusof might go to Krasnoe before him. He was brought before the Emperor on a charge of misconduct, and sent to Berlin, where he soon after fell a prey to chagrin. A report was also in circulation which threatened the French with the march of Tchitchakof upon Minsk, and with the defection of Schwartzenberg. The numbers of the army were daily diminishing, and its supplies cut off. Against this host of calamities Napoleon could oppose nothing but a firm countenance. He stopped five days at Smolensk, and during that time had placed the whole of the remaining cavalry under one leader, Latour-Maubourg. Eugene, Davoust, and Ney were to leave the place in succession after him. Ney was not to quit it till the 16th or 17th, when he was to destroy all the ammunition, and blow up the towers of the city-walls.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

At length, on the 14th of November, at four o'clock in the morning, the Imperial column quitted Smolensk. Its march was still firm and decided, but silent and solemn as night. The first day they advanced five leagues to Korythnia, which Junot had passed with his corps of Westphalians, now reduced to seven hundred men. At this very time Kutusof was advancing along the Elnia and Krasnoe road, covering the whole of it with ninety thousand men, parallel to the Emperor, whom he had outstript, and sent forward different detachments to Krasnoe, Lyadi, and Nikoulina, to cut off the retreat of the French. While all these hostile troops were stationing themselves about him, Napoleon was reposing tranquilly in a wretched habitation, the only one remaining in the village of Korythnia, and appeared not to be aware of or to despise those movements of men, arms, and horses by which he was surrounded: he dispatched no orders to hasten on the other corps, and waited for daylight to begin his march himself. Shortly after, a file of Cossacks drew up across the road, but they were easily dispersed; when suddenly the fire of a battery burst from the heights on the left, and a body of horse, under Miloradowitch, attacked the Westphalian corps, whose chief losing his presence of mind, they were thrown into confusion. A young officer (Excelmans) at this moment stepped forward, and by his voice, hand and eye, encouraged the men, and restored order. Junot died soon after the termination of the campaign, it is supposed of the severe wounds he had received, and of the excesses in which he indulged. The enemy observing this head of column march in good order, did not choose to attack it otherwise than by bullets. When the grenadiers of the Old Guard came to pass across this fire, they closed around Napoleon like a living fortress, proud of their privilege of protecting his person. The band played, the air *Où peut-on être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille?*¹ But the Emperor, whom nothing escaped, said, 'Rather play, *Veillons au salut de l'Empire!*'² Two hours after, he entered Krasnoe in some anxiety, not knowing whom he might have to encounter there; but Sebastiani and the foremost grenadiers had already driven out the enemy. He left Mortier and the Young Guard half a league behind him, holding out a feeble hand to those who came after. Miloradowitch contented himself with insulting the passage of the Emperor and the Old Guard. He did not descend from the heights till it had passed, and then threw himself across the high-road with twenty thousand men, thus separating Eugene, Davoust, and Ney from the Emperor, and barring the road to Europe against them.

¹ 'Where can one better be than in the bosom of one's family?'

² 'Let us watch over the safety of the empire.'

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Meanwhile, Eugene was exerting himself to unite his scattered troops, and did not succeed in rallying eight thousand men, before the 15th of November was far advanced. He was overtaken by night, three leagues from Smolensk; and the next day, he and the chief of his staff, absorbed in melancholy reflections, had suffered their horses to proceed unchecked, when a halt being made by the stragglers in front, he looked round, and discovered that he had advanced a full hour's march before his corps, that he was surrounded by only about fifteen hundred of his own men, of all ranks and nations, without leaders or order, and that he was summoned by the enemy to surrender. Guyon, a general, all whose men were dead or dispersed, started forward, and said to the messenger, 'Tell your commander that if he has twenty thousand men, we have eighty thousand!' The Russian withdrew in amazement, and the firing commenced. Prince Eugene was at a loss for a moment; but hastened back to bring up his divisions to force a passage before it was yet too late. Guilleminot in his absence called the officers together, and they formed the disorderly mass about them into three platoons, who by presenting a firm attitude, and armed only with musquets, kept ten times the number of Russians at bay for more than an hour. Then hearing cannon in the direction of Krasnoe, and their patience being exhausted, they determined to cut their way through this body of Russians, which they did in spite of calls to lay down their arms, and tremendous discharges of artillery, losing half their numbers: the rest rejoined the Viceroy, who was coming towards them. Miloradowitch now attacked the main body of the French and Italians, amounting to about five or six thousand. The combatants were drawn up on each side of the road, and in the plain the battle was nearly equal; but a battery on some heights to the left did dreadful execution among the Viceroy's troops, and he asked three hundred volunteers to scale it. They were very nearly cut in pieces. Yet the mere audacity of the act staggered the Russians, who remained with victory in their hands, but without daring to use it till night, when Prince Eugene leaving fires behind him, withdrew across the fields, and had reached Krasnoc, while Miloradowitch was perhaps still dreaming of the Emperor's son-in-law delivering up his sword to him. They were nearly stopped at one time by a sentinel, but Kilsby, a Pole, stepping forward, said in Russian, 'Hist, fool! do you not perceive we are a party of Owarof's, sent on a secret expedition?' and the sentinel mistaking them for his countrymen, let them pass without giving the alarm.

The Emperor on his part had been expecting the Viceroy the whole of the preceding day. 'Eugene and the army of Italy, and the long

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

day of expectation every moment disappointed, was it all over with them at last ?' One only hope remained, that the Viceroy driven back upon Smolensk had been joined by Davoust and Ney, and that the three would appear together. In the anxiety that harassed him, he called a council of the marshals that were with him, Berthier, Bessieres, Mortier, and Lefebvre ; and the result was to re-enter Russia, to extricate their old companions in arms or perish with them. His resolution once formed, the great and important movements carrying on around him never once shook it. He knew that Kutusof was close at hand, and that Ojarowski with an advanced-guard of Russian infantry had already got before him, and was waiting for him in a village in the rear of his left. Misfortunes rather irritating than depressing him, he called for Rapp, and told him, that 'it was absolutely necessary for him to depart instantly, and hasten through the darkness to attack that infantry with the bayonet ; that this was the first time they had displayed such audacity, and that he was determined to make them so completely repent of it that they should never come so near his head-quarters again.' Then calling back his aide-de-camp, 'But no !' he resumed, 'let Roguet and his division go alone ! Do you stay here. I would not have you killed : I shall want you at Dantzic.' Rapp, while carrying this order to Roguet, could not sufficiently restrain his astonishment that his chief, surrounded as he was by eighty thousand enemies whom he was going to attack on the morrow with nine thousand men, should feel such perfect confidence in his safety as to concern himself about what he should have to do at Dantzic, a city from which he was separated by the severities of winter, two hostile armies, famine, and a distance of a hundred and eighty leagues.

The night attack at Chirkowa and Maliewo was perfectly successful. Roguet's men approached with bayonets fixed and without firing ; and such was the surprise and disorder of the Russians that they had barely time to escape, and throw their arms into a neighbouring lake. This rencounter stopped the movement of the Russians for twenty-four hours, and allowed the Emperor to remain at Krasnoe, and Prince Eugene to rejoin him there the ensuing night. He received him with the utmost joy, but soon after fell into greater anxiety than ever about the fate of Ney and Davoust. Napoleon was fully apprised of the imminence of his danger. He had it in his power to withdraw from it. Daylight had not yet arrived. He might, if he judged it right to do so, avoid this bloody conflict, and move rapidly forward with Eugene and the Guard to Orcha and Borisof. There he could immediately rally around him the thirty thousand French troops under Victor and Oudinot, those with Dombrowski, with Regnier

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and Schwartzberg, and at all his *dépôts*, and would in the following year be again able to shew an army of a truly formidable description.

On the 17th before day he dispatched his orders, armed himself, went out on foot ; and at the head of his Old Guard, put them in motion. But it was not towards Poland, his ally, that he directed his steps, nor towards his beloved France, where he might once more find himself the head of a rising dynasty, and the Emperor of the West. Grasping his sword, he exclaimed, 'I have acted the Emperor long enough ; it is time for me to act the General.' He was in fact marching back to oppose a host of eighty thousand enemies, to draw all their efforts upon himself, and divert them from Ney and Davoust. The day broke, disclosing on one side the Russian battalions and batteries, which in front, on the right, and in the rear, lined the horizon ; and on the other side, Napoleon with his six thousand Guards, proceeding with a firm step to station himself within that formidable circle, with Mortier and five thousand more a few paces in advance of him. Their object was to defend the right flank of the high-road from Krasnoe, as far as the great ravine in the direction of Stachowa. A battalion of Chasseurs of the Old Guard, drawn up in a square like a brazen fort before the high-road, served as a support to the left of the young soldiers. To the right, on the snowy plain surrounding Krasnoe, were the remaining cavalry of the Guard, a few cannon, and the horse of Latour-Maubourg. The artillery of the Duke of Treviso was reinforced by a battery commanded by Drouot, one of those men who live for virtue. Claparede remained with his few soldiers to protect the wounded and the baggage in Krasnoe. The Viceroy with his shattered troops continued his retreat on Lyadi. Roguet had been recalled from Maliewo, and the enemy were pushing some columns through the village, and extending themselves more and more to the right, with a view to surround their adversaries. The battle then began, if it could be called one. But here also was furnished a decisive proof that renown is not a worthless shadow, but a real and substantial power. The Russians had nothing to do but to march forward ; their number alone would have been sufficient to crush Napoleon and his diminished force. But they did not venture to come in contact with him. The very sight of the conqueror in so many fields of battle struck them with awe and terror. The Pyramids, Marengo, Austerlitz, Friedland, an army of victories, seemed to rise up for his defence and assistance, and to interpose, as with some overmastering spell, between him and this immense body of Russians. It was scarcely possible not to believe that in the eyes of a people so subjected and superstitious, his extraordinary renown excited an apprehension of something preternatural ; which they conceived beyond their reach

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

and annoyance, and which they ought to attack at a secure distance; in short, that against the Old Guard, that living fortress, that column of granite, as its chief had designated it, men were powerless, and that artillery alone could possibly demolish it.

They effected wide and deep breaches in the ranks of Roguet and the Young Guard; but they killed without conquering. These new soldiers, one-half of whom had never been before in battle, stood this deadly fire for the space of three hours without retreating a single step to avoid it, and without being able to return it, having no cannon, and the Russians keeping out of the reach of their small arms. But every moment the danger grew greater. The report of cannon and a message from Claparede announced that Benigsen was on the road from Lyadi. The fire of the enemy flashed in the east, the south, and the west. The French had no retreat but the north and the Dnieper, near which were the high-road and the Emperor. The Russians were thought to be covering an eminence just over his head with cannon. He was informed of the circumstance, and glancing his eye towards the spot, merely said, 'Well then, let a battalion of my chasseurs carry it!' Then without paying any farther attention to the matter, his looks and concern reverted exclusively to the danger of Mortier. Just at this moment, Davoust made his appearance through a cloud of Cossacks, whom he was scattering before him. The first corps was now saved; but information arrived at the same time, that the rear-guard could no longer defend Krasnoe, and that all hope of saving Ney must be given up. Napoleon could not for some time make up his mind to so great a sacrifice; but seeing no remedy, and that all must otherwise be lost, he sent for Mortier, and grasping his hand in the utmost distress, said that 'the enemy were assailing him, that Kutusof might cut him off from Lyadi and the last bend of the Boristhenes, that he would proceed thither with all speed with the Old Guard to secure the passage, that Mortier and Davoust must keep possession of Krasnoe till night, and then follow him.' He then moved slowly from the field of battle, passed through Krasnoe, where he again halted, and afterwards made his way to Lyadi.

Mortier obeyed his instructions, and kept his ground for some time, by the most desperate valour, and at last led off his three thousand men (which were all he had remaining) in the face of fifty thousand, at the usual marching-step. 'Do you hear, soldiers,' said General Laborde, 'the Marshal orders the ordinary time? The ordinary time, soldiers!' Among the accidents of this march, a shell from an adjoining height entered the body of a horse and burst there, blowing the horse to pieces without hurting the rider who fell upon his feet and proceeded on. When night came, Napoleon found that

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Mortier had got before him on the road. He sent for, and gently reproached him, saying, 'he had doubtless fought gloriously; but why had he placed his Emperor between himself and the enemy; thus exposing him to be made a prisoner?' The next day the march was continued. The impatient stragglers went before; and all of them passed Napoleon, who was on foot, with his *bâton* in his hand, proceeding with difficulty and reluctance, and halting every quarter of an hour, as if he could scarcely tear himself away from Old Russia, the frontier of which he had just passed at Lyadi, and in which he had left his unfortunate companion in arms. In the evening they reached Dombrowna, a town with inhabitants in it (an extraordinary sight), and those inhabitants friendly to them. The weather was also grown milder: but it was now too late. The army was destroyed. Here news was brought that Tchitchakof had entered Minsk on the 17th. Napoleon was at first speechless, as if he had received a mortal blow; then rousing himself with the urgency of the danger, he coolly remarked, 'Well, we have nothing to do now but to make our way with the bayonet.' He then sent off orders to Dombrowski and the Duke of Reggio to hasten the passage of the Berezina at Borisof, and to the Duke of Belluno to cover his march on the right. During the night there was an alarm of Cossacks in the camp; and the panic extended to the Guard, and awoke Napoleon. He addressed them very seriously upon it. There was a peculiar feeling with regard to these hordes of half-savages; not exactly fear, but a mixture of aversion and contempt, like the disgust that is felt for some unclean animal. Advantage was taken of this circumstance by the most skilful among the marauders, who had only to cry 'The Cossacks are coming,' to have all the booty left to themselves. At Orcha were found provisions in great abundance; and here once more the gens-d'armes made their appearance, who at first attempted to repress disorder, but soon found their occupation gone. Napoleon entered Orcha with six thousand men, Eugene with eighteen hundred, Davoust with four thousand. The Marshal himself had lost every thing; was without linen; and emaciated with famine. He declared that none but men of steel could go through such trials. But the firmness of Napoleon appeared to increase with his danger. In his estimation, and in the midst even of the wildest waste of swamp or ice, this handful of men was always the Grand Army, and himself the Conqueror of Europe. Nor was any rashness or blind infatuation mixed up with this feeling, as was evident from his burning in this very town, and with his own hands, all those of his effects which might serve as trophies, should he fall into the power of the enemy; and among other things, the papers which he had collected as materials for writing his own life.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Buonaparte wished to have attacked Wittgenstein, but he was dissuaded from this project. He then decided for Borisof; but he was slow in quitting the Boristhenes. His regrets still clung to Ney, as did those of the whole army. After Napoleon had left Orcha on the 20th, they accused each other of having deserted him. They asked questions of those who had last seen him; and when all their conjectures were exhausted, and they were on the point of giving up all hope, on a sudden they heard the trampling of horses and the joyful exclamation, 'Marshal Ney is saved; he will be here in a moment's time; here are the Polish horsemen come to announce his arrival!' He was approaching along the right bank of the Boristhenes, and applied for assistance. Eugene went to give it him; and when they met, the troops of the latter overwhelmed those of Ney with congratulations and anxious inquiries. They replied that they had set out for Smolensk on the 17th, with twelve pieces of cannon, six thousand bayonets and three hundred horse, leaving their sick to the enemy's mercy. At the gates of the city an act of infamy had struck them with horror. A woman had left her child to perish in the snow, saying, he had never seen France, and would not miss it; and persisted in doing so, till the soldiers, enraged at her depravity, left her to the fate she had designed for her offspring. When near Korythnia, the report of cannon and bullets whizzing over their heads made them believe that an engagement was near; when going to learn the cause, they found only two French batteries which had been left behind, and some wretched Cossacks galloping off through the fields at full speed, scared at their own temerity in discharging the guns, and at the noise they made. Hitherto they had seen only the traces of a disastrous rout—fragments of armour, scattered garments, carriages and cannon sticking in the hollows, and the horses fastened to them still struggling or dead and half-devoured. But now they came to a field covered with blood and with the slain, where they found, by the buttons, that the 64th division of the Italian guard had been engaged here just before; but they could not learn from the silence of death, or the desolate scene around, what had become of the survivors. They hastened by, and through a hollow defile emerged into a spacious plain. They knew it for the same, where three months before they had defeated Newerowski, and saluted Napoleon on his birth-day, with the cannon taken from the Russians. The soldiers of Mortier then said that it was also the same spot where the Emperor and themselves had fought, and waited for them on the 17th. Ney's men rejoined, that here they still found Kutusof, or rather Miloradowitch, for the old Russian had not yet stirred from Dobroe. Those in advance pointed to the plains of snow, or the rising grounds on the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

left frowning with the enemy's forces. An officer came to summon them to surrender; but Ney having answered that a Marshal of France never surrendered, at once those cold and silent hills were converted into so many volcanos belching fire. In the midst of all these explosions, the French general, unmoved, unhurt, everywhere present, seemed to be in his own peculiar element. He launched Ricard with fifteen hundred men against the hostile army, ordered four hundred Illyrians to assail their left, and himself with three thousand men mounted to the assault in front. He was repulsed and hurled back into a ravine; but regaining the summit, he there rallied and waited for the enemy who did not dare to follow him. Winter brought night to his assistance. He then gave the signal to his troops to retire, as if returning to Smolensk; but coming to a stream, and breaking the ice to see which way the current ran, he exclaimed with true military instinct, 'This stream flows into the Dneiper! This is our guide!' And following its course, reached the Dnieper at about a league's distance. A lame peasant whom they met shewed them where they could best pass; but the ice would bear only one at a time, and Ney slept on the bank, wrapped in his cloak, for three hours that it took his army to assemble and gain the other side. They next attempted to get over the carriages with the sick and wounded, but in vain. One officer, of the name of Brigueville, floated over on a piece of ice, and was rescued by Ney himself. They now marched forward, scarcely knowing whither; following a route, where stooping down in the dark, they perceived that an army had just passed before them, but it brought them to a village, where they found provisions, repose, shelter, and a hundred Cossacks, whom they took prisoners. For three days they then pursued their perilous way, beset by Platof and his flying hordes, narrowly escaping Kutusof's army, availing themselves of night, the woods, and the river to cover their retreat, till they arrived near enough to Orcha to dispatch Pchebendowski and fifty Poles for succour. During the whole time, they remained calm, collected, cheerful, and seemed amidst so many prodigies of bravery and of skill to have done nothing extraordinary. Each of the few last days had had its distinguished men; Eugene on the 14th, Mortier on the 17th, but now all agreed to proclaim Ney the true hero of the retreat. When Napoleon, who was two leagues distant, was apprised that Ney had come back, he absolutely leaped and shouted for joy: he exclaimed, in a tone of transport, 'I have saved my eagles then! To redeem such a man as that from destruction, I would have given three hundred millions out of my treasury!' This unanimity is the highest of all; for there is no effort that costs so much as to rejoice at the good fortune of others. They who do not respect the brave are not brave themselves.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Napoleon, even after the capture of Minsk, was not prepared to hear of the taking of Borisof on the 21st. It was on the morning after this fatal event, at three days' march from Borisof, and on the main road, that an officer met Napoleon with the disastrous news. The Emperor, striking the earth with his staff, raised his eyes with an expression of impatience towards heaven, and exclaimed, 'It is then written there, that henceforth every step shall be a fault !' Napoleon was now at Toloczina ; he had the position of Borisof explained to him. The Berezina was there three hundred toises wide, and the bridge over it totally destroyed. He then pointed with his finger on the map to a point below Borisof, where he wished to pass : but the presence of Tchitchakof on the right bank was made an objection. Then going lower still, and seeing that he was approaching the country of the Cossacks, he stopped short, and exclaimed, ' Ah ! yes, Pultowa ! Like Charles XII ! ' And then added, ' Thus it is, when one heaps faults upon faults ! ' These bursts of passion were short and rare, and did not alter his general demeanour. Berthier, Duroc, Daru declared that ' to them he appeared immovable : ' and so he was, compared with the rest of mankind. A conversation that passed that night will show the critical situation in which he was placed ; and probably gave the first idea of his separation from the army. The night was far advanced, and Napoleon had retired to rest ; Duroc and Daru stayed in his chamber ; and believing their chief to be asleep, gave vent in a low voice to the most gloomy forebodings. He heard them, however, and the words, ' Prisoner of state,' striking his ear, ' What ! ' said he, ' do you suppose they would dare ? ' Daru was taken by surprise, but recovering himself, he replied, ' That if they were forced to surrender, they must expect the worst, and could have little dependence on the generosity of the enemy.' ' But France ! ' replied the Emperor, ' what will she say ? ' ' As for France,' continued Daru, ' we might make a thousand distressing conjectures ; but we can none of us tell what would happen there.' He then added, that ' for the principal officers as well as the Emperor himself, it would be well, if through the air or any other medium, since the passage of the earth seemed shut against them, the Emperor could reach France where he could save them much more certainly than he could by remaining with them.' ' I only embarrass you then,' replied the Emperor, smiling. ' Yes, Sire.' He continued silent some time, when he asked, ' If all the reports of the Ministers were destroyed ? ' He was answered in the negative. ' Well,' he replied, ' go and destroy them ; for it must be acknowledged we are in a calamitous situation.' With this confession on his lips he fell asleep, having the power, when necessary, of deferring every thing to the morrow.

On the 24th he learnt that the only point at which he could attempt

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the passage of the Berezina was in the neighbourhood of Studzianka, a little to the right of Borizof, where the river was fifty-four toises wide, and six feet deep; and the landing-place on the other side in a marsh, under the fire of a commanding position strongly occupied by the enemy. Napoleon prepared for this as for a desperate undertaking: but there was no resource. His first step was to collect all the eagles and have them burnt. He formed eighteen hundred of his dismounted guard into two battalions, assembled around him a troop of five hundred gentlemen, consisting of the officers of Latour-Maubourg's cavalry, who were still mounted; and had all the useless carriages burnt. He then plunged into the dark and boundless forest of Minsk, in which a few spots had been cleared for small villages and miserable habitations. It resounded with the report of Wittgenstein's artillery, who came down from the north, accompanied by winter (which seemed along with Kutusof to have quitted the French) upon the flank of their feeble expiring column. This threatening sound hastened their steps. Forty or fifty thousand men, women, and children passed through the wood as fast as their weakness and the slipperiness of the ground would permit. As they approached Borizof, loud shouts were heard before them. Some ran forward, believing they were about to be attacked. It was the army of Victor, which had been tardily pursued by Wittgenstein to the edge of the forest. They were waiting for Napoleon. They were still unbroken in numbers and in spirit, and at the sight of their Emperor burst forth into the customary acclamations. They were ignorant of his disasters, which had been concealed as much as possible even from their leaders. When instead of the formidable column which was about to achieve the conquest of Moscow, they beheld behind Napoleon only a band of spectres covered with rags, women's pelisses, bits of carpet, or with dirty cloaks scorched by the fire of the bivouacs, and with feet wrapped in the most wretched tatters, they were struck with consternation. They looked with affright upon the miserable and emaciated soldiers, whose harassed and squalid faces were deformed with hideous beards, marching without arms and without order, hanging their heads and fixing their eyes on the earth in silence like a troop of captives. Nor were they less astonished at the sight of so many straggling field-officers, occupied only in securing the remnant of their property or providing for their safety, and mixing indiscriminately with the soldiers, who seemed not to regard them. The soldiers of Victor and of Oudinot could not believe their eyes, and shed tears over those of their comrades whom they recognized in the crowd, and with whom they shared their food and clothing. They asked 'where was the main body of the army?' And this small band

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

collected round their chief being pointed out to them, their eyes still wandered in search of the remainder.

And yet the unarmed, the dying even, though they knew that they must make their way across a river and in the face of a new enemy, doubted not of victory. It was indeed but the shadow of an army, but it was the shade of the Grand Army. It felt itself conquered by nature alone. The sight of their Emperor sustained their courage. They had long been accustomed to look to him not merely for life but for victory. This was their first unfortunate campaign, out of so many that had been fortunate. All that was wanted was strength to follow him : he alone who had raised his soldiers to such a height and precipitated them so low, could save them. And thus, surrounded by men who might have reproached him with their sufferings, he marched without fear : speaking to them all without restraint or affectation, in full confidence that their respect for him would endure as long as their respect for glory. He knew well that he belonged to them as much as they belonged to him ; and that his renown was the property of the nation. Every man would rather have turned his arms against himself (which indeed many did) than against their leader : it was the less suicide of the two. Some crawled to fall and die at his feet, and even in the ravings of delirium, they implored but never reproached him. In fact, did he not take part in the common danger ? Who had lost so much as he ? If there were any murmurs, they were not heard when he was present. Of all their misfortunes, the greatest was that of displeasing him ; so rooted was their trust in and their submission to the man who had made the world submit to them, and whose genius, till now always triumphant, always infallible, had taken the place of their own free-will !

The French were now approaching the most critical part of the retreat. Victor was in the rear with fifteen thousand men ; Oudinot in advance, and already on the Berezina with five thousand ; the Emperor mid-way between them with seven thousand effective men, forty thousand stragglers, and an enormous mass of baggage and artillery, chiefly belonging to the second and ninth corps, that had lately come up. On the 25th, as he was on the point of reaching the Berezina, he stopped on the high-road every moment, waiting for night to conceal his arrival from the enemy, and to give time to the Duke of Reggio to evacuate Borisof. He had resolved to pass at Studzianka. The spot had been pointed out by Corbinau, an officer of Oudinot's, who having been repulsed by Tchitchakof as he was trying to reach Borisof from Smoliany, and forced to make a retrograde movement along the Berezina, could not discover any place at which to pass the river, when he perceived a Lithuanian peasant, whose horse being

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

still wet appeared to have just come out of it, and who showed him the way across, immediately opposite Studzianka. Oudinot, who had been apprised of the circumstance, conceived that this would be the best way for the army to pass; and even if the bridges should fail, the Emperor and cavalry could cross the ford, by which means all would not be lost in peace as well as war, as would be the case if Napoleon were left in the power of the enemy. Accordingly, from the night of the 23rd, the general of artillery, a company of pontoon-men, a regiment of infantry, and Corbineau's brigade occupied Studzianka. At the same time, two other passages above and below Borisof were reconnoitred: all of them were closely watched. The question was, how to deceive and dislodge the enemy; and as nothing could be done by force, stratagem was resorted to. Three hundred men and a number of stragglers were sent on the 24th towards Oukoholda, two miles below the town, with instructions to collect, with as much noise as possible, all the materials necessary for constructing a bridge. The division of cuirassiers also filed off with great parade in the same direction, in sight of the enemy. Beside this, Lorence, general-in-chief of the *état-major*, ordered several Jews to be brought before him, interrogated them with affected ignorance about the ford, seemed perfectly satisfied with their answers, that there was no other; and to make sure that these men would betray him, made them swear to meet him again on the other side of the Berezina, and inform him of the movements of the enemy.

While Tchitchakof's whole attention was thus drawn to the left, preparations were secretly made for crossing the river at Studzianka. Eblé did not arrive till five in the evening of the 24th, when the piles that had been formed the preceding evening of the beams of the Polish huts were found too weak. It was necessary to begin the work again. It now became impossible to finish the bridge during the night. It could only be completed during the day of the 25th, and under the enemy's fire. But there was no time for hesitation. As soon as this decisive night closed in, Oudinot resigned to Napoleon the occupation of Borisof, and took up his position with the rest of his corps at Studzianka. They marched in perfect darkness, and in profound silence. At eight o'clock, Oudinot and Dombrowski took possession of the heights which commanded the passage; at the same time that Eblé posted himself on the edge of the river, with his workmen and a *caisson* full of loose iron from the wheels of empty carriages, out of which with great risk and difficulty they had forged cramp-irons. They had sacrificed every thing to preserve this apparently trifling resource. It saved the army. At the close of the evening of the 25th, he drove the first pile into the muddy bed of the river. The

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

French worked all night, up to their necks in water, and struggling with the pieces of ice that the stream carried down, by the light of the enemy's fires which gleamed from the heights on the other side of the river, and within range of the guns and even the musquetry of Tchaplitz's division, who sent to inform his general-in-chief of what was going on.

The presence of a division of the enemy took away all hope of deceiving the Russian Admiral. Every moment they expected to hear all his artillery open upon the French artificers; or even should they remain undiscovered till day-light, the work would not be sufficiently advanced to be of use; and the passage was too much exposed to be forced. Napoleon therefore set out from Borisof at ten o'clock at night, in the full expectation of encountering some desperate accident. He established himself with his six thousand and four hundred guards at Staroi-Borisof, in a house belonging to Prince Radziwil, on the right of the road from Borisof to Studzianka, and at an equal distance from these two places. He passed the remainder of the night without retiring to rest, going out every moment to listen or to inspect the passage where his fate was to be decided. The darkness was scarcely dissipated, when he joined Oudinot. The presence of danger calmed him, as it always did. But at the sight of the Russian fires which marked their position, his most determined generals, such as Rapp, Mortier, and Ney, declared that if the Emperor escaped now, they must indeed believe in his presiding star. Even Murat confessed that it was time to relinquish all thoughts but of saving the Emperor, the means of which were tendered by some brave and devoted Poles, who had offered themselves as his guides, and had pledged themselves for his safety. Napoleon however rejected this suggestion as a proposal for a shameful and cowardly flight, and would not hear of deserting his army in the midst of danger.

Day now dawned, and the Russian fires gradually grew paler, and at length disappeared. The French troops took their arms; the artillery-men ranged themselves at their guns, the generals watched the enemy's movements—all stood in the silence of intense expectation and impending danger with their eyes rivetted on the opposite bank. From the preceding evening, every stroke of the pontoon-men, resounding along the woody heights, must have drawn the attention of the enemy. The dawn of the 26th exhibited his battalions and artillery confronting the weak scaffolding, which Eblé still wanted eight hours to complete. The French had no doubt that they waited only for day to direct their fire with greater certainty. It appeared: they saw the fires abandoned, the bank deserted, and on the heights thirty pieces of artillery in retreat. A long column was filing off

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

towards Borisof without looking behind them; while a horde of Cossacks was seen hovering on the skirts of the wood, leaving a free passage to the French. The latter scarcely dared to believe their eyes. But at length, they clapped their hands and shouted for joy. Rapp and Oudinot hastily entered the apartment of the Emperor: 'Sire,' they exclaimed, 'the enemy has raised his camp and abandoned his position!' 'It is impossible,' replied the Emperor: the news was soon confirmed by Ney and Murat. Napoleon darted from his head-quarters; he looked and saw the last files of Tchaplitz's column retire and disappear in the wood. In a transport of joy, he exclaimed, 'I have deceived the Admiral!'

At this moment, two of the enemy's field-pieces returned and fired. Only a single shot was fired in answer for fear of calling back Tchaplitz, as the bridge was scarcely half-finished. But the Emperor impatient to be on the other side of the river, pointed it out to the bravest of his officers. Jacqueminot, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Reggio, and the Lithuanian Count, Predzieczki, rushed foremost into the water; and in spite of the ice which cut the chests and the flanks of their horses, they gained the opposite bank. They were followed by Sourd, chief of a squadron of horse, and fifty chasseurs of the 7th carrying some light infantry behind them, and by two slight rafts, which transported four hundred men, making the passage twenty times. In about an hour the bank was cleared of the Cossacks, and the bridge for the infantry finished; Legrand's division crossed it rapidly with its artillery amid shouts of '*Vive l'Empereur*' and under the eye of their leader, who himself assisted in the passage of the artillery. On reaching the opposite shore, he cried out, 'My star then still reigns!' for he was willing to indulge in the belief in fatality common to all conquerors, who finding their schemes succeed fancy they are registered in heaven, and that their will, seconded by causes for which they know not how to account and out of the reach of mortals to control, is fate.¹

At this juncture a Lithuanian nobleman, disguised as a peasant, arrived at Wilna with the intelligence of Schwartzenberg's victory over Sacken. Napoleon loudly proclaimed this success, adding that 'Schwarzenberg had returned instantly on Tchitchakof's traces, and was hastening to their assistance:'—a supposition which the disappearance of Tchaplitz rendered not improbable. But the fact was that the Admiral, deceived by the false demonstrations of Oudinot towards Ucholoda, and in all likelihood by the report of the Jews, had resolved to descend the Berezina at the same moment that Napoleon

¹ It will be seen hereafter that his understanding was not the dupe of this flattering and politic illusion.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

was ascending it, and recalled all the troops he had stationed above Borizof. Having fallen into so serious an error, he was slow in retracting it, and spent the whole of the two next days in reconnoitring, in feeling his way, and as it were in trying to avoid the acknowledgment of his mistake. While Tchitchakof was thus thrown upon a false scent, Napoleon with about six thousand of the Guards and the remains of Ney's corps, passed the Berezina about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 26th and posted himself in Oudinot's reserve, while Victor took up the position the Guards had quitted on the heights of Studzianka. Tchaplitz returned on the 27th to attack Oudinot and Dombrowski on the side of Stachowa; Wittgenstein advanced from Borisof against Victor; and the battle raged for two days on both sides of the river, while the stragglers, the baggage, the wounded, and the women were struggling to pass a second bridge that had been constructed for artillery a little higher: but which breaking down in the middle drove the tide of misery and frantic distress back upon the first. The scene that followed, the pity, the terror, the anguish and the despair were such as beggar description and might serve to make fiends shudder and kings smile! Night brought no relief. The dark mass of men, of horses and carriages directed the enemy's fire: Victor's troops, which passed at nine in the evening, crushed and overthrew all in their way; yet the multitude stupified or desperate refused to stir, and in the morning of the 29th when Eblé set fire to the bridge to prevent the Russians passing it, thousands were seen wandering in desolate groups on the enemy's bank: some threw themselves into the river, others rushed upon the flames of the bridge, which gave way under them, encountering both sorts of death at once, and their bodies floated down the stream, jostling against the loose fragments of ice that accompanied their progress.

The catastrophe being over, the remains of the army that were collected on the right bank, formed only a shapeless mass which rolled confusedly off towards Zembin. The whole of the surrounding country is a vast morass. The army traversed this dreary tract by means of three successive bridges, each three hundred toises in length, with an amazement blended with both joy and fear. Tchaplitz had occupied them for several days, and heaps of faggots of a combustible kind of wood were lying at the entrance to them. A spark from the pipe of one of his Cossacks would have sufficed. Then all the exertions of the French, all their sufferings in crossing the Berezina, would have been fruitless. Entangled between these marshes and the river, pent up in a narrow space, without provisions, without shelter, the army and its leader must have yielded without a struggle. It was therefore by miracle that they escaped. Up to the last moment,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Napoleon had stayed on these dismal banks, near the ruins of Brilowa, without covering, and at the head of his Guard. During the day, they remained under arms and in order of battle: at night they bivouacked in square around their chief, and these old grenadiers were incessantly employed in keeping up their fires, which a violent wind blew out. They were seen sitting on their knapsacks, with their elbows on their knees and their heads on their hands, dozing, thus doubled together that their limbs might impart some warmth to each other, and that they might be less tormented by the gnawing emptiness of their stomachs. During these three days and three nights, the Emperor, whose eye and whose thoughts seemed to wander from the midst of the faithful band in several directions at once, supported the second corps by his presence and by his orders, defended the ninth and the passage across the river by his artillery, and united his exertions to those of Eblé in saving as much as possible from the general wreck. Lastly, he directed the march of the remnant of his army in person towards Zemin, whither Prince Eugene had preceded him. It was observed that he ordered his marshals, who had now lost most of their men, to take up positions on the road, just as if they still had armies under their command. One of them made some bitter complaints to him on the subject, and began to enumerate his losses, when Napoleon hastily interrupted him with these words, 'Why do you try to rob me of my serenity?' And when the marshal persisted, he stopped his mouth, repeating in a tone of reproach, 'I beg to know, Sir, why you try to rob me of my serenity?'—an expression which showed the sort of deportment he wished to maintain in his adversity, and that which he required from others.

During these dreadful days, every bivouac around him was marked by its circle of dead. There were promiscuously assembled men of all nations, ranks, and ages; ministers, generals, commissaries. One most remarkable figure in the group was an old nobleman, a relic of the gay and brilliant days of the French court. As soon as day broke, this general-officer of sixty was seen sitting on the snow-covered trunk of a tree, employed with unalterable gaiety upon the details of his toilet. In the midst of the hurricane he dressed and powdered his head with the greatest care, as if in mockery of the miseries and the adverse elements which assailed him. Near him, the scientific men, almost cut in pieces by the north wind, were engaged in inquiries into the causes of its direction.

On the 29th, the Emperor left the banks of the Berezina, driving before him the crowd of disbanded men, and marching with the ninth corps. In this way he reached Kamen, where he slept, together with the prisoners taken the preceding day, who were folded like cattle.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

On the 30th he reached Pleszczentzy, where the Duke of Reggio, who had been sent on with a few men, was attacked by Landskoi and his Russians, whom he repulsed. He was wounded when the Westphalians who preceded the Emperor came to his relief. On the 3rd of December, Napoleon arrived at Maladeczno in the morning. This was the last point, at which Tchitchakof might have intercepted him. Some provisions were found at this place, forage was abundant, the day fine, and the cold supportable. And at length, after having been a long time without the appearance of any courier, they all met here at once. The Poles were immediately ordered upon Warsaw by way of Olita, and the dismounted cavalry on the Niemen by way of Merecz. Up to this moment, Napoleon had never seemed to conceive the idea of quitting his army. But about the middle of this day, he suddenly announced to Daru and Duroc his determination to set out immediately for Paris. Daru now saw no reason for his departure; but his resolution was fixed. He said he had to pass through four hundred leagues of doubtful friends or secret enemies; and to do this with safety, he must do it at once, before his intention was known, or they had time to take their measures. The difficulty was, whether to leave Murat or Eugene behind in command of the army, but he decided for Murat as the most showy character. He did not take Berthier with him, in spite of his earnest entreaties. Caulaincourt received orders to make secret preparations for his departure. The place indicated was Smorgony; the time, the night of the 5th of December.

Ney arrived with the rear-guard from Zembin on the 5th of December, fighting all the way with Tchaplitz's troops, who followed him across the marshes of the Berezina. They expected to be joined by Victor, but he had gone forward in the track of the Emperor. At Maladeczno dispatches arrived, in which Victor was charged to support the retreat and Ney ordered on to Smorgony. Napoleon had just reached that place, his last Imperial head-quarters: he completed his last instructions and revised the 29th and last bulletin of his shattered army. Precautions were taken that nothing should transpire till the morrow. At length, night came, and with it the moment the Emperor had fixed for declaring his resolution to the leaders of the army. All the marshals were summoned. As they entered one by one, he took them apart, and gained them over to his project, either by arguments or by address. His manner was engaging and affectionate to all; but he was more particularly attentive to Davoust, between whom and himself there had been some coolness. Then, having seated them all at his table, he praised them for their noble deeds of arms. When the repast was ended, he desired

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Prince Eugene to read them his 29th bulletin : after which, declaring aloud what he had told each of them in private, he said, that ' this very night, he was going to set out with Duroc, Caulaincourt, and Lobau for Paris. That his presence there was indispensable to France as well as to the remnant of his unfortunate army. There only could he control the Austrians and Prussians. Those nations would doubtless hesitate to declare war upon him, when they knew him to be at the head of the French nation, and of a fresh army of twelve hundred thousand men.' He added, that ' he had sent Ney before to Wilna, to reorganize every thing in that place—that he would be seconded by Rapp, who would then proceed to Dantzic, Lauriston to Warsaw, and Narbonne to Berlin ; that his household would remain with the army, but that the decisive blow must be struck at Wilna. The enemy must be stopped there. There they would find Loison and De Wrede, reinforcements, provisions, and ammunition of every kind ; they would afterwards take up their winter-quarters behind the Niemen ; and he hoped the Russians would not pass the Vistula before his return. I leave,' added he in conclusion, ' the command of the army to the King of Naples, I hope you will obey him as myself, and that the most perfect harmony will reign among you.'

It was then ten o'clock at night : he arose, and pressing their hands affectionately, embraced them all, and set out. He and Caulaincourt were shut up in a carriage, of which his Mameluke Rostan, and Wukasowich, the captain of his guard, occupied the box. Duroc and Lobau followed in a sledge. That very night the Russians surprised and abandoned Joupranoi, or as others state Osmiana, on his direct route ; and Napoleon was within an hour of being taken by them. At Miedniki he found the Duke of Bassano, who gave him favourable accounts ; he turned Wilna by the suburbs, passed through Wilkowiski, where he changed his carriage for a sledge ; halted on the 10th at Warsaw : hence, passing rapidly through Silesia, he revisited Dresden and its monarch, then Hanau, Mayence, and at last reached Paris, where he suddenly made his appearance on the 19th of December, two days after the publication of his twenty-ninth bulletin.

Nothing remarkable happened to the army after he left it, but the increased severity of the cold and the dissensions which began to arise among the chiefs. The former produced dreadful distresses and accidents. Numbers were seen hovering round the bivouacs at night like groups of spectres, unable to stand, afraid to lie down ; others crowded together in heaps in buildings, where they were stifled or crushed to death, while some rushed madly into the fires, from which their famished comrades drew out their half-consumed limbs. In some respects the winter gave them relief, for it prevented the enemy

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

in a great measure from pursuing them : the Russians also perishing by thousands. Among the French generals who were most lamented, Eblé and Lariboissiere fell martyrs to the cold. One of the most terrible scenes was at Wilna, where they had hoped for every thing, the crowd rushing eagerly to the gates, and pressing one another to death in the confusion. Here however they at last procured shelter over their heads, had the luxury of tasting leavened bread, and of eating it as they sat. Here also they beheld with delight and admiration a regiment fully equipped with arms, and in entire new uniforms ; they gazed at them as if they had come from the other world ! Murat here took fright at an alarm of Cossacks and fled to Gumbinnen ; where being afterwards joined by Ney, who brought up the troops and acted throughout with the most exemplary courage and fidelity, he thought proper to call a council of war, and to vent his spleen against the Emperor. He exclaimed, ‘ that it was no longer possible to serve a madman ; that there was no longer any security in adhering to his cause ; that not a single prince in Europe relied either on his word or treaties. He bitterly regretted his rejecting the propositions of England ; had he not done so,’ he added, ‘ he should still have been a powerful sovereign like the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia.’

Here he was interrupted by Davoust, who observed with great animation, ‘ The King of Prussia and Emperor of Austria are monarchs by the grace of God ; sovereigns whose thrones are cemented by the power of time and the long usage and hereditary attachment of their subjects. But you,’ said he, ‘ are king only by the grace of Napoleon and of French blood : and you can continue king only by the power of Napoleon, and by alliance with France. You are blinded by black ingratitude.’ And he immediately added, that ‘ he should forthwith denounce him to the Emperor.’ Murat was abashed and confounded. He felt that he was guilty ; and thus was extinguished the first spark of that treason which at a later period was destined to prove the destruction of France. Murat, soon after stung by a letter which he received from his wife, who had exercised some act of sovereignty in his absence, of which he was jealous, hurried forward from Marienwerder to Posen, where he abandoned the army and disappeared. This was on the 16th of January, twenty-three days before Schwartzenberg disconnected himself from the French army under Prince Eugene, and sixteen days after Macdonald had learnt the defection of Yorck and Massenbach, on the last day of the preceding year. This defection was disavowed by the King of Prussia, but very soon (as might be expected) followed up by other acts of the same kind. In all the towns, after passing the Niemen and Poland, the inhabitants mani-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

fested their inward joy at seeing the French troops return discomfited and fugitives. The troops, however, kept a firm and erect countenance. Vanquished by the elements, they did not fear the face of man. In some places this feeling broke out into open violence. Davoust's carriage was stopped at Königsberg by the mob, when the marshal leaping out of it, seized one of the ringleaders, and making his domestics bind him behind his carriage, drove off with his captive unmolested. The French sick and wounded were almost utterly neglected, receiving neither attendance nor supplies of food. Several thousand perished in this manner at the convent of St. Basil at Wilna ; but the stench arising from their dead bodies infected the conquerors, and avenged the conquered. The Russians arrived on the Vistula on the 22nd of January and the day following ; when Alexander being about to cross his own frontier, addressed a proclamation to his troops. He stopped their march at Kalitch. The greater part of the French who could, threw themselves into Dantzic.

There is an account of Buonaparte's passage through Warsaw, by the Abbé de Pradt, which, though evidently caricatured, and tinged with the extravagance and prejudices of the writer, is too curious to be omitted in this place. The Abbé had received too many rebuffs from the Emperor for his vanity and forwardness, not to be willing to overcharge his picture. His words are as follows :—

‘ At length, the 10th of December arrived. I had just received a dispatch from the Duke of Bassano, to inform me of the approach of the diplomatic body which had passed the summer at Wilna. I was engaged in answering him, to make him aware of the objections to his stay in an open town in face of the enemy, when the doors of my apartment flew open, and gave admittance to a tall figure, led in by one of my secretaries to the embassy. “ Make haste, come, follow me,” were the words which this phantom addressed to me. A black-silk handkerchief enveloped his head, his face was as it were buried in the thickness of the furs in which it was inclosed ; his walk was impeded by a double rampart of furred boots : it resembled a scene of apparitions from the other world. I arose, advanced towards him, and catching some glimpses of his profile, I recognized him, and said, “ Ah ! is it you, Caulaincourt ? Where is the Emperor ? ”—“ At the hôtel d’Angleterre : he waits for you.”—“ Why not alight at the palace ? ”—“ He does not wish to be known.”—“ Have you every thing you want ? ”—“ Let us have some Burgundy and Malaga wine.”—“ The cellar, the house, all is at your service. And where are you going in this manner ? ”—“ To Paris.”—“ And the army ? ”—“ It exists no more,” he said, raising his eyes to heaven.—“ And this victory of the Berezina, and the six thousand prisoners talked of by the Duke

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

of Bassano?"—"That is all over; some hundreds of men escaped: we had something else to do besides minding them." Then taking him by the arm, I said to him, "*Monsieur le duc*, it is time to think well of it, and for all the true friends of the Emperor to join in letting him know the truth."—"What a tumble!" he replied: "at least I have not to reproach myself with not having warned him of it. Come, let us go: the Emperor attends us." I precipitated myself into the court-yard, into the street;—arrived at the *hôtel d'Angleterre*; it was half-past one. A Polish sentinel stood at the gate; the master of the hotel looked at me, hesitated for an instant, and then let me pass the threshold of his dwelling. I found in the yard a small carriage mounted on a sledge made of four pieces of fir-wood: it was half-demolished. Two other open sledges served to convey General Lefebvre Desnouettes, with another officer, the Mameluke Rostan, and a livery-servant. Behold all that remained of so much grandeur and magnificence. I thought I saw the winding-sheet borne before the funeral of the Saladin. The door of a narrow low room opened mysteriously; a short parley took place. Rostan recollected and let me in; they were making preparations for dinner. The Duke of Vicenza went forward to the Emperor, announced, introduced me, and left me alone with him. He was in a mean-looking apartment, with the window-shutters half-closed to prevent his being seen. An awkward Polish maid-servant was putting herself out of breath with blowing the fire made of green wood, which resisted all her efforts, with a great deal of noise discharging more moisture in the chimney-corners than it gave warmth to the room. The spectacle of the fall of human grandeur never had any charms for me. I dropped, without any intermediate steps, from the scenes at Dresden, to this lodging in a miserable inn. I had not seen the Emperor since that period. I cannot describe the crowd of feelings, both new and painful, which rose at once in my breast.

'The Emperor according to custom, was walking up and down his chamber: he had come on foot from the bridge of Prague to the *Hôtel d'Angleterre*. I found him enveloped in a superb pelisse covered with a green stuff, with magnificent gold trimmings; his head was concealed in a sort of fur cowl, and his leathern boots were loaded with a quantity of fur. "Ah! *Monsieur l'Ambassadeur!*" said he, laughing. I approached him with eagerness; and in that accent which sentiment alone can inspire, and can alone excuse in the subject to the sovereign, I said to him, "You are well; you have given me a great deal of uneasiness; but at last you are come—how glad I am to see you!" All this was uttered with a rapidity and in a tone which ought to have revealed to him what was passing within me.

LIFE . OF NAPOLEON

The unhappy object of so much solicitude did not perceive it.¹ A moment after, I helped to take off his pelisse: "How are you off in this country?" Then resuming my place, and returning to the distance which I had only quitted through an emotion easily excused in the circumstances, I traced, with the caution necessary with all sovereigns, but more particularly with a prince of his humour, the picture of the actual state of the Duchy: it was by no means brilliant. I had received that very morning a report of an affair that had taken place on the Bug, near Krislow, in which two battalions of new levies had thrown away their arms at the second discharge, as well as advices, that out of twelve hundred horses belonging to the same troops, eight hundred were lost through the neglect of these raw recruits; farther, that five thousand Russians with artillery were marching upon Zamosk. I told him all this; I insisted on the propriety (for the Emperor's own dignity, as well as that of the Confederation) of letting the embassy and the council go quietly away, without waiting the arrival of the enemy; I enlarged on the inconveniences of the residence of the diplomatic body at Warsaw. I spoke to him of the distress of the Duchy and of the Poles: he rejected this idea, and asked with impatience, "Who then has ruined them?" "What they have done for six years," I replied, "the scarcity, and the Continental System, which has deprived them of every kind of commerce." At these words, his eye kindled. "Where are the Russians?" *I told him; he was ignorant of it.*² "And the Austrians?" I told him. "It is fifteen days," he said, "since I have heard of them. And General Reynier?" The same. I spoke to him of all that the Duchy had done for the subsistence of the army; he knew nothing of it. I spoke of the Polish army: "I have not seen a single person of that country during the campaign," was his reply. I explained to him why and how the dispersion of the Polish forces had ended in rendering an army of eighty-two thousand men almost invisible. "What is it the Poles want?" "To be Prussians, if they cannot be Poles." "And why not Russians?" with an air of irritation. I explained the reasons of the attachment of the Poles to the Prussian government: he had no suspicion of them: I knew them so much the more, inasmuch as *the evening before*, some ministers of the Duchy, having staid with me a long time after dinner, had determined on laying hold of a connection with Prussia as the plank to save them from shipwreck. He continued, "It is necessary to raise ten thousand

¹ The Abbé felt an inclination to be familiar with, and to patronise Buonaparte in his reverses, and complains that the latter did not enter into the spirit of this.

² One would suppose it was the Abbé who had just left them, and that Buonaparte had only heard of such people by report. This is true French; and so of the rest.

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

Polish Cossacks ; a lance and a horse will suffice ; with these they will be able to stop the Russians." I combated this idea, which appeared to me to combine all sorts of objections at once ; he insisted ; I defended myself, and concluded by saying, "*For myself, I see no good except in armies well organized, well paid, and well fed ; all the rest signifies little.*"¹ I complained of some French agents ; and when I told him that it was injurious to send men without decency and without talents into foreign countries, he said, "And where are the men of talents ?" The conversation had led me to speak of the little enthusiasm the Austrians had found among the inhabitants of Volhynia ; on this subject I quoted the testimony of Prince Louis of Lichtenstein, whom I had entertained at Warsaw, whither he had come, in consequence of a wound received in an engagement on the Bug ; and as I attached to his name an epithet of honour which I believed to be fully due to it, he looked stedfastly at me ; I paused. "Well, and this prince," repeating my expression "go on." I perceived that I had given offence. Shortly after, he dismissed me, desiring me to bring to him after dinner Count Stanislaus Potocki and the Minister of Finance, whom I had pointed out to him as the two most respectable members of the council. This interview had lasted nearly a quarter of an hour. The Emperor had not ceased walking and using gestures the whole time, as I have always seen him do. Sometimes he fell into an appearance of a profound reverie : it was his custom. We rejoined him about three o'clock : he had just risen from table. "How long have I been at Warsaw ? Eight days—no, only two hours," he exclaimed, laughing, without other preparation or preamble. "From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step. How do you find yourself, Count Stanislaus, and you, Sir, the Minister of Finance ?" On the repeated protestations made by these gentlemen of the satisfaction which they felt at seeing him safe and well after so many dangers, "Dangers !" he said, "not the least. I live in the midst of agitation : the more I am crossed, the better I am. It is only sluggish kings who grow fat in their palaces : I do so on horseback and in the camp. From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step." It was clear that he saw himself pursued by the hue-and-cry of all Europe, which was to him the greatest possible punishment. "I find you greatly alarmed here."—"It is because we only know what public rumour tells us."—"Bah ! the army is superb : I have a hundred and twenty thousand men : I have constantly beaten the Russians. They dare not stand before me. They are no longer the soldiers of Friedland and Eylau. We shall hold

¹ One would suppose by this, that Buonaparte had been in the habit of neither paying, feeding, nor disciplining his armies.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

out in Wilna : I am going in search of three hundred thousand men. Success will make the Russians bold. I will fight two or three battles with them on the Oder ; and in six months I shall be again on the Niemen. I weigh heavier on the throne than at the head of my army : assuredly, I quit it with regret, but it is essential to watch Austria and Prussia ; and on my throne I weigh more than at the head of my army. All that has happened is nothing : it is a misfortune ; the effect of the climate ; the enemy has had nothing to do with it, I have beaten him every where. They wanted to cut me off at the Berezina : I made sport of that *imbecile* of an admiral " (he could never pronounce the name). " I had good troops and some cannon ; the position was superb ; fifteen hundred toises of morass, a river." This was repeated twice over. He added a great number of things on minds strongly or feebly tempered, almost all that is to be found in the 29th bulletin ; then he went on to say, " I have seen many of a different stamp. At Marengo I was beaten till six in the evening : the next day I was master of all Italy. At Essling I became master of Austria. That archduke thought to stop me : he has published something, I know not what : my army had already proceeded a league and a half in advance : I had not done him the honour to make any arrangements, and it is known what is to be expected when I come to that. I cannot hinder the Danube from rising sixteen feet in one night. Ah ! but for that it would have been all over with the Austrian monarchy ; but it was written above that I was to marry an Archduchess." This was said with an air of great gaiety. " In like manner in Russia I cannot hinder it from freezing : they came to tell me every morning that I had lost ten thousand horses in the night : well then ! good-bye ! " This recurred five or six times. " Our Norman horses are not so hardy as the Russian ones ; they do not stand more than nine degrees of cold : the same with the men : go and look at the Bavarians, there is not one left. Perhaps it will be said that I staid too long at Moscow. That may be, but it was fine : the winter-season came on before the usual time : I expected peace there. The 5th of October, I sent Lauriston to treat for it. I thought of going to Petersburg ; I had time enough, in the southern provinces of Russia, to pass the winter at Smolensk. We shall stop at Wilna : I have left the King of Naples there. Ah ! it is a grand political drama ; he who risks nothing gains nothing. From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step. The Russians have shewn themselves. The Emperor Alexander is beloved. They have clouds of Cossacks. It is something, this nation ! The peasants of the crown love their government. The nobility mounted on horseback. It was proposed to me to enfranchise the slaves, but I

RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

would not listen to it; there would have been a general massacre; it would have been horrible. I made a regular war on the Emperor Alexander; but then again who would have thought they would have struck such a blow as that of the burning of Moscow? Nevertheless, they attribute it to us, but it was themselves who did it. It would have done honour to the Romans. Numbers of French have followed me: ah! they are good subjects; they will find me again." Then he plunged into all sorts of digressions on the levying the corps of Cossacks, who to hear him talk were to arrest that Russian army, before which three hundred thousand French had just fallen. The ministers in vain insisted on the state of the country: he would not recede. Till then I had thought it right to leave them the ground to themselves. I did not allow myself to mingle in the conversation, till it became an object to interest him in the distresses of the Duchy. He granted under the title of a loan a sum of from two to three millions of the copper-money of Piedmont, which had been three months at Warsaw, and three or four millions of bills coming due from the contributions of Courland. It was I who drew up the order for the minister of the treasury. He announced the near approach of the diplomatic corps. "They are spies," he said, "I would not have them at my head-quarters. They were forced to come. All of them are spies, solely occupied in conveying intelligence to their several courts." The conversation was prolonged in this manner for nearly three hours. The fire had gone out: we all of us felt the cold. The Emperor, heating himself by dint of speaking, had not perceived it. He replied to a proposal to traverse Silesia, "Ah, ah, but Prussia." In fine, after repeating two or three times more, "*From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step*," after inquiring if he had been recognized, and adding that it was indifferent to him; after renewing to the ministers the assurance of his protection, and making them promise to take courage, he begged to depart. I gave him the assurance that in the course of the Embassy nothing which concerned his service had been forgotten. The ministers and myself then addressed him in terms the most affectionate and respectful, wishing him his health and a prosperous journey. "I have never been better in my life; if I had the devil at my back, I should only be the better for it." These were his last words. Immediately he mounted into the humble sledge, which bore Cæsar and his fortune, and disappeared. A violent shock was near overturning it as it passed through the gateway.

'Such was word for word this famous conversation in which Napoleon shewed without disguise his rash and incoherent genius, his cold insensibility, the fluctuation of his mind between a dozen different schemes, his past projects and his dangers to come. It struck me too

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

much not to be quite sure that I have represented it with the greatest accuracy. I have examined myself well, and I have not the smallest consciousness of having either forgotten or altered any thing.'—*History of the Embassy to Warsaw*, p. 221.

If those who are acquainted with his character from other more authentic sources do not here recognize the likeness to Napoleon, they will at least find a striking picture of the sort of people about him (the army excepted), and of the hydra of vanity, impertinence, and selfishness he had to contend with in a whole nation.¹

CHAPTER XLIX

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813

ON the morning after Buonaparte's return, all Paris resounded with the news; the doubts and uneasiness which had existed for some time past were dispelled; and with new hopes former confidence was restored. The twenty-ninth bulletin which had just appeared in the *Moniteur* prepared the public mind for great reverses; but the malcontents were disappointed by the frankness and abruptness with which he had disclosed the particulars and extent of his failure, and they complained that he had purposely exaggerated them in order to give the recital an air of greater magnanimity and candour. Some persons can hardly contain their surprise that the better to gratify the eagerness of their enemies for such an event, the Parisians did not turn round upon Buonaparte at this very first opportunity as an impostor and usurper. They cannot conceive how in the circumstances in which they were placed, which demanded the greatest exertions and sacrifices, the French did not refuse to make any, and at once give up the contest in despair. They think that as the Russians had gone the length of burning Moscow to shew their loyalty and patriotism, the French could do no less than send a deputation half-way to the Niemen with the surrender of the keys of Paris, to shew their sense of such disinterested and heroic conduct by reversing the picture and opposing a complete foil to it. They

¹ While the Abbé was making one of his long, tiresome speeches, Buonaparte scrawled on the corner of the chimney-piece the order for his dismissal, and for the return of the embassy to France. In the same book in which the Abbé affects to bewail the misfortunes of Napoleon, and to have done all he could to prevent them, he also boasts that the Emperor would have conquered the whole world, had it not been for one man in it, *viz.* himself. It is in the same work that the author applies to his hero the epithet of Jupiter-Scapin. If this phrase does not apply altogether to either of the parties, at least there would be no difficulty in making it out between them.

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1818

give you to understand that as the Allies were about to turn against the French, the latter should have anticipated them by turning against themselves, and begging pardon of these bare-faced moutherers about liberty and independence, for having ever ventured to defend theirs. Finally, that they ought to have applied to the Prince-Regent to send them a king *not* of their own choosing, for the honour of France, the safety of Europe, and the peace of the world. They were bad enough, but not quite so base, so prone, so mad as these gratuitous advisers and hypothetical suborners of slavery would have them.

The Emperor convoked the Council of State. 'All had gone well,' he said—'Moscow was in his power—every obstacle was overcome—the conflagration of the city had made no material change in the condition of the French army; but winter had been productive of a general calamity, in consequence of which the army had sustained very great losses.' He is here accused by the adverse party of disingenuousness in laying the blame on the seasons, and not his own bad generalship. Had he not been victorious, he must have suffered less. Had he been defeated in battle by the Russians, he could not have staid in their country till winter compelled him to quit it. But whether advancing or retreating, in the plenitude of his strength or in the most straitened circumstances, he vanquished—at the Moskwa, at Malo-Jaraslavetz, at the field of Katowa, lastly, at the passage of the Berezina. They might have done wisely in leaving it to the season (their surest ally) to destroy him, but they did so. They came victorious out of the struggle not by resisting, but by enduring more than others—and more than Napoleon had been led by former example to expect. Farther, it is stated (to make out a triumphant case) that the whole of the Grand Army was destroyed, that not a man of it was left, not owing to the inclemency of the seasons, but abstractedly to the blunders and incapacity of its chief, to make which account good, *lists are given of five hundred thousand men who did not return out of four hundred and fifty thousand* (the utmost number that went), when presently after it is shewn that fifty-four thousand soldiers had been able to throw themselves into the Prussian garrisons alone. The accounts, in short, vary according to the object which the malice or servility of the writer has in view at the time, and are not at all to be depended on. They do not pretend to be true, but loyal.

Addresses came pouring in to the Emperor from all the principal towns: speeches were delivered by the orators of different public bodies of a sufficiently fulsome description: the public officers were called into double activity; and in a short time, with the assistance of a decree of the Senate, anticipating the conscription of 1814, he was enabled to carry his levies of every kind to three hundred and fifty thousand men. In this number were included the hundred cohorts or

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

one hundred thousand youths of the First Ban of National Guards, who had been placed in frontier-garrisons as militia, but were now converted into regular soldiers of the line ; and forty thousand seamen who being of no use to a navy which did not exist, and merely idled away their time in the seaport towns, were formed into corps of artillerymen. The affairs of Spain were at this time in a favourable posture for Buonaparte. Lord Wellington, after the battle of Salamanca, being ill-supported by the Spanish chiefs, repulsed before Burgos, and in danger of being intercepted by Soult, who had raised the siege of Cadiz and was coming to join D'Erlon, retreated according to his usual practice into the territories of Portugal ; and enabled Napoleon to withdraw from the war in the Peninsula a hundred and fifty skeletons of battalions, which he made use of as the means of disciplining his new conscripts. Four regiments of guards, one of Polish cavalry, and one of *gens d'armes*, were at the same time brought from Spain. To these were to have been added four regiments of Guards of Honour, to be raised by enrolling ten thousand youths of the higher ranks as troops of the Imperial household ; but the republican jealousy of the Old Guard put a stop to the scheme. The greatest difficulty was in recruiting and remounting the cavalry, and restoring the artillery and *materiel* of the army which had been lost in the late campaign. For this purpose the treasures in the vaults of the Thuilleries, which though largely drawn upon for the preparations of the preceding year, were not yet exhausted, were again resorted to by Buonaparte, whose munificence and whose economy were alike princely. Artisans were set to work ; horses were purchased in every quarter ; and such was the active spirit of Napoleon, and such the extent of his resources, that he promised the Legislative Body (and kept his word) without any addition to the national burdens, to provide the sum of three hundred millions of francs to repair the losses of the Russian campaign.

Buonaparte at this time endeavoured to settle his differences with the Pope, which were a stumbling-block to a number of good Catholics, and might tend to lessen that popularity, of which he at present wished to secure as large a share as possible. The Holy Father had been detained at Savona till June 1812. He was then hastily removed to Fontainebleau, where he arrived on the 19th of that month. He was here treated with every mark of respect ; and had every indulgence allowed him, except his liberty. He remained at Fontainebleau till Napoleon's return from Russia ; and it was on the 19th of January, 1813, that the Emperor, having left St. Cloud under pretext of a hunting party, suddenly presented himself before the aged Pontiff. He exerted all the powers of persuasion which he possessed to induce Pius VII. to close with his views. He rendered the submission which he required more

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1818

easy to the conscience of the head of the church, by not insisting on any express cession of his temporal rights, and by granting a delay of six months on the question of canonical instalment. Eleven articles were agreed to and subscribed by the Emperor and the Pope. But hardly was this done, ere the feud broke out afresh. It was of importance to Napoleon to have the schism healed as soon as possible, since the Pope refused to acknowledge the validity of his second marriage, and of course to ratify the legitimacy of his son. He therefore published the articles of the treaty in the *Moniteur*, as containing a new Concordat. The Pope ready to pick a quarrel, more particularly in the present circumstances, complained of this step, stating that the articles were not a Concordat in themselves, but only the preliminaries, on which after due consideration such a treaty might have been formed. He was indignant at what he termed circumvention on the part of the Emperor of France, and refused to abide by the alleged Concordat. Thus failed Napoleon's attempt to terminate the schism of the church; and the ecclesiastical bickerings recommenced with more acrimony than ever.

Buonaparte was greatly incensed when he heard of Murat's conduct and departure from the army on the 16th of January, and substituted Eugene Beauharnais in his place, with the remark, 'The Viceroy is more accustomed to the management of military affairs on a large scale; and besides, enjoys the full confidence of the Emperor.' This oblique sarcasm considerably increased the coldness between the two brothers-in-law. Meantime, the Russians continued to advance without opposition into Prussia, having left behind them the line of their own territory, which was to be a wall of brass, a sacred barrier to others, but which they were to pass whenever they pleased: such virtue is there in a soil where the growth of slavery had never been blighted! A clod of Russian earth is not under any circumstances to be trampled by a foreign foot. Why? Because a serf is bound to it and cannot get free. A clod of French earth is to be trampled by the foreign foe. Why? Because the example of liberty had taken root in it and had till now defied the obscene hoofs of barbarous and mercenary hordes to extirpate it! Therefore, it was to be doubly blotted out, first, from the old hatred to the thing; secondly, from the new right of revenge for having failed so often before, retaliation being just on the part of kings, but unjust on the part of the people. So say the statist. If slavery has rights, and liberty has none, if kings have rights and the people have none, not even to defend themselves, except as the slaves of kings, if war is to be always and strictly defensive on the part of the people, but may be instantly turned into the offensive against them, so be it said and understood any where but in these pages; but there it shall never be

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

so said or understood for an instant ! It is conjectured that if the King of Prussia had refused to join the coalition against France, his subjects might in that moment of excitation have found some one else to have placed at the head of the government : so eager were these brain-sick patriots to rivet on their own chains and those of others. But there was no occasion to resort to popular violence to make the King adopt this course. It was easy for him to revert to the feelings and the line of conduct of which he had set the example in 1792, and which nothing but the extremity of his circumstances had ever interrupted ; and on the 1st of March he concluded a treaty offensive and defensive with Russia for the same implied objects. Previously to this, he had suddenly left Berlin and repaired to Breslau, where there were no French soldiery. Immediately after, he published an address to his people, calling his armies together and giving the signal for the latent and widespread spirit of animosity against the French to manifest itself.¹ On the 15th of March the Emperor Alexander arrived at Breslau. The meeting between the two sovereigns was affecting (to them). The King of Prussia wept. ' Courage, my brother,' said Alexander, ' these are the last tears which Napoleon shall cause you to shed.' It is to be observed that the tone of these princes was that of persons who were and had always been friends, however necessity or policy might have forced them to dissemble ; that as despotic princes they had and could have but one interest at heart, one feeling in common ; that whatever appearances they had assumed or engagements they had entered into were merely royal masquerading to conceal or to attain their fixed and favourite purpose ; and one of them wept at being assured by the other that this object which had been so long deferred, the restoring the people to their lawful proprietors, had now a chance of being accomplished with the unlooked-for aid and the infuriate acclamations of the people themselves.

On the 16th of March, Prussia declared war against France. That paper, in order to give a plausible colour to the tone of patriotism and independence which it adopted, ought to have contained the Manifesto of the Duke of Brunswick as its preamble ; it should have reprobated it as the cause of all the misfortunes of Prussia and of France, have placed

¹ It has been remarked as a peculiarity in the Prussians that they did not like to be subjected to foreigners, who must therefore (it is argued) have used them very ill. I wonder, if the French had conquered England, whether we should have been reconciled to them if they had used us ever so well. This is so far from being a singularity, that the French are themselves the sole instance of a people who, when these same Prussians afterwards imposed it on them, submitted without a murmur or a struggle to a foreign yoke. I know that a nice distinction is here taken between a *foreign yoke* and a *yoke imposed by foreigners*. Should we understand it, if Europe in arms should unite to give us back the Stuart race ?

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813

this disclaimer as a bar to the repetition of any similar outrages, and then it might have seemed that its own loud professions of the principles of liberty and independence were any thing but the most flagrant hypocrisy or loathsome affectation. It ought to have done this at least, before a single human being, who had ever known what the word freedom meant or the resentment due to the insolent refusal of that right to the whole human race, could be supposed to sympathise with it. And yet many friends of freedom took fair words, vague promises, vows made in pain for current payment, for full indemnity and security in this great question where the rights and liberties of all mankind so often threatened, and which had so often escaped by miracle, were to be once more put at stake, who would not be so grossly imposed upon in a matter where property of their own of five shillings value was depending. But why should I take the responsibility of the indifference or blindness of mankind to their own rights and interests upon myself? What have I to do with it more than others? I have not Gyges's ring to take the remedy into my own hands.—Napoleon received the Prussian declaration of war as a thing of course. 'It was better,' he said, 'to have a declared enemy than a doubtful ally.' In a few weeks Prussia had an army in the field, eager to revenge the wrongs they had received and still more those they had not been able to inflict; and Blucher took the chief command of it, of whom Buonaparte afterwards said that 'he had more trouble from that old dissipated hussar than from all the generals of the Allies beside.' The Crown-Prince of Sweden also joined the Coalition, his attachment to old friends and principles giving way to the new. Austria stood aloof and undecided, inasmuch as in her case the ties of family-connection made a war (should it not turn out a successful one) a matter of great personal delicacy to the sovereign. Otto, the French minister at Vienna, could however see in the Austrian cabinet a disposition to revive the ancient claims which had been annulled by the victories of Napoleon; and wrote to his court so early as the beginning of January that they were already making a merit of not instantly declaring war against France. As an obvious piece of state-policy and to conciliate (as far as possible) the Emperor of Austria, the Empress Maria-Louisa was soon after appointed Regent during the absence of her husband.

In the midst of all these difficulties and hostile preparations accumulating around him, Buonaparte, from prudence as well as pride, did not abate of the loftiness of his pretensions. He knew the value of material force; but he also knew the power of opinion. A single word, betraying his weakness or want of confidence in the continuance of his fortunes, might be fatal. Besides, with the sort of people he had to deal with, who thought they had a prescriptive right to all, one concession

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

would only lead to another. If he gave up Poland to Prussia or his claim to the mediation of Switzerland, he would next have to give up Italy to Austria, Spain to Ferdinand, and France to Louis XVIII. It was necessary to make a stand somewhere; and he thought he could do this best upon the basis of victory, when he could shew himself at once moderate and firm. The only fault he committed was in supposing the Allied Monarchs too much influenced by political interests and too little by the *esprit du corps*. He would not see this; for he affected to be one of them, by which he lost an immense lever over popular feeling. Indeed, the submissions to which he had made the Allies stoop might in some degree warrant such a conclusion, but then his power had been absolute: now it was contingent, and there was nothing, he might be sure, they would not do to avenge their wounded pride and recover themselves in their own good opinion by blotting all traces of his power (together with the recollection of the mortifications it had occasioned them) from the face of the earth. It would therefore have been better to have followed up his advantages, to have struck home, and thus regained his old ascendancy over their fears, and not have stopped to negotiate on equal terms which were impossible. There never was nor could be any such feeling in the case. It was a question whether inordinate pretensions on the one side could be put down by sheer force on the other. The pride of birth is a madness, a disease in the blood, which nothing but 'the iron rod, the torturing hour' can tame. Buonaparte had a sufficient force to wield, his genius was unimpaired; but he had lost one incalculable advantage, the persuasion that he could not be conquered. If he had been conquered by the seasons, yet he had been conquered; and he might be so again. The victory was no longer deemed as certain beforehand as after it had happened. This made his enemies hold out in circumstances where they would formerly have given up, and his friends shrink from the mere possibility of a turn of fortune. This in spite of his first successes in the summer of 1813, and the ability and resources he displayed, was the casting-weight against him, for it led to the improvement of accidents which would not before have been noticed, and to repeated defections, which would not have been ventured upon, while it was thought no disparity of numbers could be of any avail against him.

In the month of April he had increased his army by three hundred and fifty thousand men in addition to the great garrisons maintained in Dantzic, Thorn, Modlin, Zamosk, Custring, &c. augmented as they were by the remains of the Grand Army which had taken refuge in these places. He had besides an active levy going on in Italy, and a large army in Spain; so that he was not ill prepared either for peace or war. In the field, he was perhaps equal to his enemies, for his own skill and

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813

masterly combinations might be said to double his numbers : he had to contend with hatred abroad, for those whom he had beaten attributed to him all the wars, defeats, and disasters in which their own governments had involved them : to counterbalance or keep in check this rising spirit, he wanted (what now began to fail him) the opinion that he was invincible. But all that it was possible to do in the circumstances, he did : nor can we blame him, if Gods and men were averse to his success. The Russians relying on the favourable disposition of Prussia had left the various fortresses behind them, and advanced towards the Oder and the Elbe. The King of Sweden in virtue of a convention into which he had entered at Abo, crossed over to Stralsund in the month of May 1813, with a contingent of thirty-five thousand men, with which, when joined to fifty or sixty thousand Russians and Germans, he meant to attack Buonaparte's left flank, while he was engaged in front by the main body of the Russian and Prussian armies. Three flying corps under Czernicheff, Tettenborn, and Winzingerode, spread along both sides of the Elbe. The French everywhere retreated to concentrate themselves under the walls of Magdeburg or other fortified places, of which they still kept possession. Meantime, Hamburg, Lubeck, and other towns declared for the Allies, and received their troops with an alacrity which in the case of Hamburg was afterwards severely punished. The French general, Morand, endeavoured to put a stop to this tide of ill-fortune by throwing four thousand men into Luneburg ; but he was hardly in the place when the Russians under the command of Czernicheff suddenly appeared, forced their way into the town, and on the second of April killed or took prisoners the whole of Morand's corps. Prince Eugene, wishing to strike a decisive blow, marched from Magdeburg, with a view of surprising Berlin ; but was himself surprised at Mockern, driven back, and obliged to shut himself up in Magdeburg, where he was blockaded.

Denmark, which had always been a firm adherent to France, at this time appeared to waver in its determination. The King of Saxony retired from the impending storm to a place of security in Franconia ; while his army separated themselves from the French, and throwing themselves into Torgau, offered to stipulate for a neutrality. Davoust retreated northward after blowing up the bridge at Dresden, which city shortly after became the head-quarters of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia. Three of the fortresses held by the French in Prussia—Thorn, Spandau, and Crenztochan—surrendered to the Allies ; but the expectation that the other garrisons would follow the example was put a stop to by the arrival of the numerous forces which Napoleon had in so short a time levied to repair his late losses. He left St. Cloud on the 15th of April, stopped

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

eight days at Mayence to give time for the collecting of the troops which he sent forward in the direction of Erfurt, where he arrived himself on the 24th. Prince Eugene at the approach of the new French levies through the passes of the Thuringian mountains, removed from Magdeburg, and formed a junction with them on the Saale. The force present in the field was about a hundred and fifteen thousand. It was composed chiefly of the new conscripts. The Allied Army was drawn up between Leipsic and Dresden; and they meant (had they not been anticipated by Buonaparte) to have given battle in the plains of Jena as 'a field fitting for their vengeance,' in the language of their partisans. Why the recovering a lost field of battle in a war between two nations should be termed *vengeance* does not appear, except on the supposition (which indeed is everywhere implied) that for an army not led by an hereditary despot to defend itself against, much more to beat, one that is so led on, is an outrage and an assumption of equality which merits every kind of reprobation and exemplary punishment. This single phrase explains the whole secret. 'Their speech bewrayeth them!' A change of some importance had taken place in the Russian army by the death of Kutusof. He was succeeded in the command by Wittgenstein.

Skirmishes took place at Weissenfels and Posern on the 29th of April and the 1st of May. On the last day (the eve of the battle of Lutzen) a contest took place in the defile of Rippach, near Posern, when Marshal Bessieres coming up to see how the action went was killed by a spent cannon-ball. He was sincerely lamented by the Emperor and the whole army. His loss was particularly regretted by Duroc, who was soon after to meet his death in the same casual way, and who seemed almost to have a presentiment of it.¹ The war kept its pace: the French continued to advance upon Leipsic; the Allies approached from the north to defend it. The centre of the French army was stationed at a village called Kaya, under the command of Ney. He had asked particularly to have the young conscripts placed under his charge, and said he would answer for the consequences. 'Our greybeards,' he said, 'know as much of the matter as we do, and boggle at a number of difficulties; but these brave youths think of nothing but glory.' He was supported by the Imperial Guard, with its new parks of artillery, drawn up before the well-known town of Lutzen, which had witnessed the last conflict of Gustavus Adolphus. Marmont commanded the right. The left reached from Kaya to the Elster. Buonaparte expected to have found the allied troops on the other side of Leipsic, and was hurrying

¹ *Ceci devient trop longue, nous y passerons tous*, was the emphatic expression that he used on hearing of the fate of Marshall Bessieres.

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813

forward for that purpose; but encouraged by the presence of the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia, they came to the unusual resolution of advancing to meet him, crossed the Elster during the night, and in the morning of the 2nd, assaulted the French centre with the choicest of their troops under Blucher. The fury of the attack succeeded, and the Allies were on the point of gaining possession of Kaya. Napoleon was not wanting to himself at this crisis. He hurried in person to bring up his Guard to sustain the shock which his centre had received, while he moved forward his two wings, commanded by Macdonald and Bertrand, and supported by his batteries like moving fortresses, so as to outflank and surround the main body of the Allies. The battle lasted for several hours: at last, the Allies finding they could not break through the French centre, and seeing the French press upon them on each side, withdrew from the danger with difficulty, and with a tremendous loss, estimated at not less than eighteen or twenty thousand men. Two circumstances mainly contributed to the success of the battle. General Bertrand came up after it began, in time to enable Marmont to join the centre when it was pushed hardest; and Miloradowitch, from some cause or other, was absent. Scharnhorst, reputed the best tactician in the Prussian service, was killed, and Blucher wounded. The youth of Paris and of the German universities emulated each other's ardour and prodigality of life in this contest; the one striving to recover that independence which a crusade against liberty had deprived them of, and the others fighting for that victory, which was the only security for *their* independence or honour for a single hour. As to the metaphysical students of the north of Germany, we might stop to ask, Could not the subtleties of the Kantian philosophy purge away the grossness of the doctrine of *divine right*; or teach them to resolve the hackneyed sophistry of a state paper into a series of moral equations? Those who survive are as silent as the dead on this subject at present. The King of Prussia himself set a good example to the troops under him; and charged at the head of his regiment of Guards. Buonaparte made soldiers kings, and kings soldiers! The want of a sufficient number of cavalry prevented him from following up his victory as he otherwise might. He however remained in possession of the field of battle and of all his former reputation. Couriers were immediately dispatched with the news of the battle, even to Constantinople.

The Allied Monarchs fell back upon the Mulda. The French troops were again admitted into Torgau, notwithstanding the opposition of the Saxon general, Thielman; and the King of Saxony returned from Prague, whither he had fled, and was conducted back in a kind of triumph to his capital, which he entered on the 12th.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

The Allies could no longer maintain themselves on the Elbe, though the main body retired no farther than Bautzen, a town affording a strong position near the sources of the Spree, about twelve leagues from Dresden. A corps of observation under Bulow watched Berlin, and kept open the road to Silesia. One of the consequences of this retrograde movement was that Czernicheff and Tettenborn were obliged to withdraw their protection from Hamburg and other towns in that direction, which had thrown open their gates to the Allies. Hamburg was immediately attacked by Davoust with five or six thousand men, when the terrified inhabitants, to their great surprise, saw the Danish gun-boats and artillery sent from Altona to their assistance. But this demonstration of kindness was of short duration. For the Danes after the battle of Lutzen thinking the star of Napoleon had risen again, and not liking the specimen which the Allies had just given them of the connection between their professions and practices, by insisting on the cession of Norway to Sweden in reward of Bernadotte's exertions in the cause of the independence of nations, and the ties of habitual attachment which ought to bind subjects to sovereigns, had returned to their old alliance with France; and on the 30th of May marched five thousand Danish troops in concert with one thousand five hundred French to take possession of the town in the name of the French Emperor. Its Allies appear to have paid little attention to the interests of Hamburg, probably because in choosing them it consulted chiefly its own. Three thousand Swedes were to have come from Stralsund to its relief; but the Crown-Prince, judiciously waiting to have his forces increased instead of helping to diminish them, would not stir. Czernicheff, though by no means pleased with his compulsory retreat from Hamburg, contrived on his march near Habersdorf to cut off a body of French infantry, taking nearly one thousand prisoners, and not letting a single individual escape. Negotiations were going on at the same time with the preparations for war; Count Bubna came to Dresden on the part of the Emperor of Austria; and the audiences were often prolonged till midnight.

The war was for a few days confined to skirmishes on the right bank of the Elbe. On the 12th of May, Ney crossed the river near Torgau, and seemed to menace the Prussian capital, probably to induce the Allies to leave their strong position at Bautzen. But as they remained stationary there, Napoleon moved forward in person to dislodge them. He quitted Dresden on the 18th. In his road towards Bautzen, he passed the ruins of the beautiful little town of Bischoffswerder, and expressed much concern at finding it had been burnt by the French soldiery after a rencounter with a body of Rus-

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1818

sians. He declared he would rebuild the place, and presented the inhabitants with one hundred thousand francs towards repairing their losses. Arriving at Bautzen on the 21st, the Emperor reconnoitred the formidable position chosen by the Allies. It was at a small distance in the rear of the town, and had the Spree in front of it. Their right was defended by fortifications, their left rested on woody eminences. Ney and Lauriston were a little to their right, prepared to act in concert with Napoleon; but Yorck and De Tolly, by a successful manœuvre, attacked and dispersed a column of seven thousand Italians, before Ney could come to their assistance. He joined the Emperor about three in the afternoon, and the army effected the passage of the Spree at different points in front of the Allied Army. Napoleon fixed his head-quarters in the deserted town of Bautzen. The two armies bivouacked in face of each other. The position of the Allies covered the principal road to Zittau and that to Goerlich; their right wing (composed of Prussians) rested on the fortified heights of Klein; the Russians occupied the woody heights to their left. The centre was rendered unapproachable by commanding batteries.

Napoleon did not try to force this position; but he resolved to turn it, and succeeded. He made Ney take a considerable circuit round the extreme left of the Russians, while Oudinot engaged them more closely. Miloradowitch and the Prince of Wirtemberg, however, made good the defence on this side. The next attempt was made on the heights on the right occupied by the Prussians. Here also the struggle was severe and bloody. It was not till Napoleon brought up all his reserves, and combined them in one desperate effort, that he carried his point. The attack was conducted by Soult and maintained at the bayonet's point for four hours, when after various success the French remained masters of the ground. At the same time, the corps of Ney, together with those of Lauriston and Reynier, amounting to sixty thousand men, appearing in the enemy's rear, Blucher was compelled to evacuate the heights, which till now he had defended with such obstinacy. Both wings of the Allies being turned, they had only to make the best of their retreat, which however they could not effect by the roads to Silesia and Breslau, but were forced to turn near the Bohemian mountains. Night closed in, and the whole of the next day was spent in harassing the enemy's rear, Buonaparte placing himself in the front of the pursuing column, exposed to a repeated and heavy fire, and urging on the pursuit by such expressions as 'You creep, scoundrel!'—addressed to one of his general officers.

At the heights of Reichembach, the Russian rear-guard made a halt; and while the cuirassiers of the Guard disputed the pass with the Russian lancers, General Bruyeres was struck down by a bullet.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

He was a veteran of the army of Italy, and favoured by Buonaparte as the companion of his early victories. But a still severer trial was reserved for Napoleon's feelings. As he surveyed the last point on which the Russians continued to make a stand, a ball killed a trooper by his side. 'Duroc,' he said to his old and faithful follower, 'Fortune has a spite at us to-day.' Some time after, as the Emperor with his suite rode along a hollow way, three cannon were fired, one ball shattered a tree close to Napoleon; and rebounding, killed General Kirchener, and mortally wounded Duroc, whom the Emperor had just spoken to. A halt was ordered, and for the rest of the day Napoleon remained in front of his tent surrounded by his Guard, who condoled with their Emperor, as if he had lost one of his children. He visited the dying man, whose inside was torn by the shot, and expressed his affection and regret. On no other but that single occasion was he observed so much overcome or absorbed by grief, as to decline listening to military details or issuing military orders. 'Every thing to-morrow,' was his answer to those who ventured to ask his commands. He made more than one decree in favour of Duroc's family, and placed the sum of two hundred Napoleons in the hands of the pastor, in whose house Duroc had expired, to raise a monument to his memory, for which he himself dictated an epitaph. In Bessieres and Duroc, Napoleon lost two of his best servants and most attached friends; and lost them at a time when he most needed them. Bessieres was the most compliant of the two; but Duroc had more of his confidence, and had more influence over him than any other person. He softened his resentments, diverted the ebullitions of his momentary impatience, without directly opposing him; and by being always governed more by a sense of duty than even his respect for the Emperor, exercised a kind of authority like a second conscience over Napoleon himself. He was not much more than forty, when he died.

On the day preceding that sanguinary conflict, an armistice had been proposed by Count Nesselrode, in compliance it was said with the wishes of Austria, who by coming forward as mediator could easily go over to the other side. It was enforced in a letter from Count Stadion to Talleyrand, whom as well as Fouché Napoleon had summoned to his presence, the latter confessedly because he did not think it safe to leave him at Paris. Meanwhile he marched forward, occupied Breslau (from whence the princesses of the Prussian royal family removed into Bohemia) and relieved Glogau, where the garrison had begun to suffer from famine. Some severe skirmishes were fought; but the main army of the Allies retreated into Upper Silesia, showing no inclination for a third general engagement. The armistice (a mischievous one) was concluded on the 4th of June, and Buonaparte

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813

testified his desire for peace, by resigning the possession of Breslau and Lower Silesia to the Allies, by which they regained their communications with Berlin.

During the armistice, Napoleon either to amuse himself or others, or to throw an air of gaiety and carelessness over the embarrassments of his situation, sent for the French actors to Dresden. He was observed at this period to have changed his tastes, as he now seemed to prefer comedy to tragedy, which is easily understood. He had now tragedy enough about him, without going to look for it in the regions of imagination, which is the privilege of minds at ease, and that from sanguine earnestness and confidence in good are thrown back by pictures of terror and pity, only the more forcibly upon their own store of enjoyment or hope. He had the celebrated actress Mademoiselle Mars introduced to him, and in answer to some question relative to her *début* on the stage, she said, 'She had begun quite young, and had crept on without being perceived.' The Emperor replied, that 'it was impossible for her to avoid notice; and he himself, in common with the public, had always done justice to her rare talents.' He found leisure at this busy period to enter into a long criticism on a piece of Fabre d'Englantine's, whom he did not like as an old Member of the Committee of Public Safety, and remarked slightly of some piece intended for representation, that *it might please the Court of Saxony*. This exclusive tone of predilection and admiration for the French cost him a good deal. His admiration was the worse, because it was that of a foreigner, who neither had nor could have a perfect sympathy with them. A Frenchman would have been satisfied with what the French *were*: he wanted them to be something more; and in endeavouring to make them a great people, and fancying that he had done so, met his own ruin. When their superiority to all the world was to be proved by any thing but a flippant assumption of it, they sunk even below the standard of mediocrity, as he soon found reason to acknowledge.

The armistice of Pleisswitz, which lasted nearly three months, gave the finishing blow to the last chance of success which Napoleon possessed. It was merely meant and made use of to gain time for reinforcements to arrive, to foment intrigues, to find pretexts for division and desertion, and to place a stumbling-block in the way of his new career of victory. He had to do with a foe that it was not enough to strike down—he must repeat the blow to disable him from rising. If they held out their hand in show of friendship, it was only to betray with the first opportunity—on principles of piety and loyalty. He had to contend with an adversary like the hydra of old, that was severed, joined again, that was crushed, but received new life and

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

warmth soon after, and that having always the will, could only be tamed by taking from it the power to hurt. Events proved this too late. The Emperor, crowned with success, halted before his baffled enemies, to whom he could now make concessions without compromising his dignity; his sacrifices could only be regarded as moderation. Napoleon in this was a victim to the *school-boy* cant of Europe; to the conventional hypocrisy of mankind. They asked for proofs of his moderation, and when they were given, turned them against him; they called out against his want of plain-dealing and sincerity, with secret treaties and articles of legitimacy in their pockets. They said, 'If you do not come into our proposals, we will accuse you of a desire for eternal war: but the instant you agree to peace, we will break off, insist on terms which we know cannot be granted, and make war upon you nevertheless.' The Congress of Prague, which met according to agreement, on the 29th of July, was merely a mask to cover or to complete designs which had been entered into two months before for the overthrow of Napoleon's power, and the restoration of the old order of things in Europe. Russia sent a French subject by birth as its representative to it. The Emperor had so little doubt of the understanding that Austria at this time had with his enemies, that he said, half-good-humouredly, half-angrily to the Austrian negotiator, 'Come, now, confess: tell me how much they have paid you for this?' What was he to do in these circumstances? Was he to brave opinion, and thus give double effect to the physical force of the Allies? Or was he to give way to opinion, and thus make an opening and grant time to the physical force arrayed against him? We have his own words in regard to this point. 'How was I perplexed,' said he, 'when conversing on this subject, to find myself the only one to judge of the extent of the danger, or to adopt means to avert it! I was harassed on the one hand by the Coalesced Powers, who threatened our very existence: and on the other by the want of spirit in my own subjects, who in their blindness seemed to make common cause with them: by our enemies, who were labouring for my destruction, and by the importunities of my people and even my ministers, who urged me to throw myself on the mercy of foreigners. And I was obliged to maintain a good appearance in this embarrassing situation, to reply haughtily to some, and sharply to reprove others, who created difficulties behind me, encouraged the mistaken course of public opinion, instead of seeking to give it a proper direction, and suffered me to be tormented with demands for peace, when they ought to have proved that the only means of obtaining it was to urge me ostensibly to war. . . . The circumstances in which we were placed were extraordinary and totally new: it would be vain to seek

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1818

for any parallel to them. I was myself the key-stone of an edifice not sufficiently consolidated, and the stability of which depended on each of my battles. Had I been conquered at Marengo, France would have encountered all the disasters of 1814 and 1815, without those prodigies of glory which succeeded, and which will be immortal. It was the same at Austerlitz and Jena; and again at Eylau and elsewhere.¹ The vulgar failed not to blame my ambition as the cause of all these wars. But they were not of my choosing: they were produced by the nature and force of events; they arose out of that conflict between the past and the future—that constant and permanent coalition of our enemies, which obliged us to subdue, under pain of being subdued.’ Suppose Buonaparte had taken the Allies at their word, and proposed that each country should give up its conquests and retain only its own independence, which was assumed as a self-evident and categorical principle with respect to France; that Italy should be independent, that the partition of Poland should be annulled, that Russia should give up Finland, that Norway should not be annexed to Sweden, and that England should renounce her exclusive maritime pretensions—would they not have laughed in his face for supposing them for a moment serious in professions for which he alone was to be the dupe, under pain of the *hue-and-cry*, the ban and anathema of Europe, all at once turned disinterested and moral? He saw the dilemma into which they strove to drive him, with odium on one hand, and imbecility on the other. They had determined henceforward to abide neither by law nor treaty with him; and while they absolved themselves from all ties, to set up a stricter standard of morality for him, from the double ‘vantage-ground they possessed of old prejudice and recent success. To make head against such odds, France should have contained another Moscow in its bosom: but her ruler seemed the only man in a nation of grasshoppers. In opposition to most of his counsellors, he held out against the proposal to give up his influence either in Italy or Germany as the price of the adherence of Austria. ‘If I relinquish Germany,’ said he, ‘Austria will but contend the more perseveringly till she obtains Italy. If on the other hand I surrender Italy to her, she will, in order to secure the possession of it, endeavour to expel me from Germany. Thus, one concession granted will only serve as an inducement to seek or enforce new ones. The first stone of the edifice being removed, the downfall of the whole will inevitably ensue. I shall be urged on from

¹ Yet the Allies affected to take revenge for all these victories by the subjugation of France and overthrow of its government, as if such a scheme had never entered their heads till now, or as if the repeated attempt to carry it into effect had not been the cause of all the grievances of which they complained! The force of hypocrisy could go no further.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

one step to another, till I am driven back to the castle of the Thuilleries, whence the French people, enraged at my weakness and blaming me for their disasters, will doubtless banish me, and perhaps justly, though they may themselves immediately become the prey of foreigners.' This is very nearly a sketch of what afterwards happened. War gave him a chance : in negotiation he had none ; for whatever concessions he had made, would have been purposely clogged with farther conditions, which must have made it impossible or infamous to comply with them. It is said that at one moment, however, Napoleon had determined to sign the terms prescribed by Austria, and took up the pen for that purpose, but stopped short, saying, ' What Austria requires is worth disputing sword in hand.' It will scarcely be credited that among the persons who came to Dresden during the armistice, was Murat, who, after hearing of the victory of Lutzen, could not keep away from the scene of such dazzling achievements, and actually figured at the head of his cavalry during the remainder of the campaign, though he had already entered into private engagements with Austria ; and in the January following, formed a strict and public alliance with England and Austria, in order to keep a throne, by joining to ruin and hunt down the man who had raised him to it. There seems to have been a studied and malicious refinement on the part of the Allies, in the selection of these apostates to honour and their country, so as at once to wound the feelings of their old benefactor, and degrade all those who had ever taken part with him.

The armistice was broken off on the 10th of August, when Austria joined the Allies ; and in the night between the 10th and 11th brilliant fire-works were let off between Prague and Trachenberg, the headquarters of the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, to announce to these sovereigns the joyful news and the hope that the times were coming when thrones should be safe, if not from sons, from subjects. The account of the battle of Vittoria had arrived in time to brace the tone of the negotiations and to try Buonaparte's diplomatic patience to the utmost, who dispatched Soult to take the command of the French armies in Spain, and oppose the further progress of the Duke of Wellington towards the south of France, which this general in his great gallantry and love of national independence was about to invade, if he could, and force a government upon it. A story is told that Soult's wife was very angry at this nomination of her husband to so distant and difficult a command, and went to remonstrate with Buonaparte about it, who answered, ' Madam, I am not your husband, and if I were, you dare not use me thus.' In the interim between the suspension and the renewal of hostilities, he had strongly fortified Dresden, intending to make it the centre of his operations, from

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1813

which he meant to sally out and defeat his enemies, as they presented themselves at different points round him; had established an intrenched camp at Pirna, and thrown a bridge of boats over the Elbe near Koenigstein. This intimated his apprehensions of an attack from the Bohemian mountains, behind which the Austrians had been stationing their army. Here he collected the young conscripts who poured in from the French frontier, learning their exercise by the way.

In the beginning of August, Napoleon had assembled about two hundred and fifty thousand men. This formidable force was placed so as to confront the enemy's troops. At Leipsic were sixty thousand under Oudinot; on the borders of Silesia, Macdonald commanded a hundred thousand men; another army of fifty thousand men was quartered near Zittau, and St. Cyr was stationed with twenty thousand at Pirna to watch the passes into Bohemia; while the Emperor occupied Dresden with his Guard, amounting to twenty-five thousand men. A considerable army was collected in Italy under the Viceroy; and a corps of twenty-five thousand Bavarians were to act as a reserve under General Wrede. Buonaparte had with him his best and oldest generals. The army of the Allies amounted to nearly double the number of the French. There were a hundred and twenty thousand Austrians, together with eighty thousand Russians and Prussians under Schwartzemberg in Bohemia, being disposed round Prague, and concealed behind the Erzgebirge hills to the south of Dresden. The army of Silesia commanded by Blucher amounted to eighty thousand more. Near the gates of Berlin was the Crown-Prince of Sweden with thirty thousand Swedes, and sixty thousand Russians and Prussians, led by Bulow and Tauenstein, by Winzingerode and Woronzoff. Walmoden was at Schwerin with thirty thousand mixed troops: Hiller with forty thousand Austrians watched the Viceroy in Italy; and Reuss was opposed to the Bavarians with an equal force.

The plan of the campaign was agreed upon at a council of the Allied Sovereigns, at which two Frenchmen assisted, Bernadotte and Moreau, as if treachery were a kind of contagion in France. The latter had come all the way from America, where he had affected a sort of Quaker morality and republican simplicity, to join the Autocrat of all the Russias in overturning the independence and institutions of his country, which was a round-about way of disproving and avenging by an overt act of treason in 1813 the imputation of it which had been brought against him in 1804, and the suspicion of it to which he had made himself liable in 1797. His friends and admirers did not the less but the more continue to sanction a life of perfidy and meanness, by tacking to his name the epithet of 'the *virtuous* Moreau.' As to the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

excuses that have been set up for his conduct in siding with the enemies of his country, they are such as go to prove that there can be neither traitors nor treason. If before we apply these hard names, we wait to inquire which side is in the right, of course this is matter of opinion. *Traitor* and *renegade* are words that have rather a more pointed and positive meaning. The old Russian who had his son condemned to death as a traitor, did not stand upon any such metaphysical nicety : why then should Moreau join in hallooing on this herd of untutored savages against his country, as if having once given a loose to their prejudices and fury, he could bring them back when he chose to the limits of reason and propriety? If we wait for the traitor to confess that his object is to restore his country to an odious slavery by first subjecting it to a foreign yoke, we shall never find an unprincipled knave so deficient in excuses. Moreau was doubly a traitor to his country and to his party, to glory and to freedom ; and if we still are inclined to throw a veil of soft sentimentality or lenient censure over his conduct, because he came over to *our* side, this is a merit which all traitors must have, that of turning against themselves and going over to the enemy. The parallel which has been drawn between him and Coriolanus is a slur upon history. If Coriolanus had been secretly leagued with the enemies of Rome and had been detected and banished for it, and had then returned with the Volscians to fulfil his first intention, there would have been a resemblance in the two cases. Thus the slime of servile pens is always ready (as well as it is able) to varnish over the character of a modern poltroon or to stain that of an ancient hero !—The principle of the campaign as sketched by the two French generals and adopted by their patrons was a sufficient tribute to Buonaparte's superiority, and showed a knowledge both of him and of themselves. It was never to come to close-quarters with him in person, but to draw him off by false demonstrations and fall upon his troops or his other generals in his absence. Blucher was the first who with this view advancing from Silesia and menacing the armies of Macdonald and Ney, induced Buonaparte to march to their assistance with his Guard and a body of cavalry commanded by Latour-Maubourg. He left Dresden on the 15th, threw bridges over the Bober, and advanced rapidly, bringing up Macdonald's division to his aid. But the Prussian general, faithful to the plan laid down, retreated across the Kutzbach, and finally established himself on the river Niesse at Jauer. On the 21st of August, Napoleon learnt that while he was pressing forward on the retreating Prussians, Dresden was in danger of being taken. His guards had instant orders to return to Saxony. He himself, leaving Macdonald to keep Blucher in check, set out early on the 23rd. It was time ; for Schwartzemberg, together

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 181

with the Russian and Prussian monarchs and General Moreau, had descended from Bohemia, and concentrating their chief army on the left bank of the Elbe, were already approaching the walls of Dresden. General St. Cyr who had been left with about twenty thousand soldiers to observe the Bohemian passes, not being in a condition to make a stand against six or seven times his own number, threw himself into Dresden in hopes to defend it till the arrival of Napoleon. The Allies displayed their huge force before the city, divided into four columns, about four o'clock on the 25th of August. If they could take Dresden, the blow would be almost fatal by cutting off Buonaparte from his supplies and his communication with France. But the importance of the object or their own unwieldy size (like that of some large-boned bully) seemed to have encumbered their motions; and instead of giving the signal for onset instantly, they waited for the arrival of Klenau with an additional corps, postponing the assault till the next morning.

On the 26th at break of day, the Allies advanced in six columns, supported by a tremendous fire. They carried two of the principal redoubts of the city; they hemmed in the French on all sides; the shells and balls began to fall thick in the streets and on the houses of the terrified inhabitants; and after engaging all his troops, St. Cyr, whose behaviour was truly heroical, felt he had yet too few men to defend a place of such extent. It was at this crisis when all thought a surrender inevitable, that columns were seen advancing on Dresden from the right side of the Elbe, sweeping over its magnificent bridges, and pressing forward through the streets to engage in the defence of the almost vanquished city. The 'Child of Destiny' himself was beheld amidst his soldiers, who, far from discovering fatigue, demanded with loud cries to be led into immediate battle. Napoleon halted to reassure the King of Saxony, who was apprehensive of the destruction of his capital; while his troops marching through the city drew up on the western side at those avenues which were threatened by the enemy. Two sallies were made under Napoleon's eye by Ney and Mortier, the one directed against the left flank of the Allies, the other on their right. The Prussians were dislodged from a hollow space, which covered their advance towards the ramparts; and the war began already to wear a new aspect, the assailants retiring from the points they had before so fiercely attacked. The sentinels of the two armies remained, however, close upon each other during the night. On the 27th the battle was renewed amidst torrents of rain and a tempest of wind. Napoleon manœuvring with the excellence peculiar to himself made his troops, now increased to two hundred thousand men, file out from the city in different directions, like rays from a centre, and

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

then turned them upon such points as seemed most assailable along the enemy's whole line which occupied the heights from Plauen to Strehlen. In this manner, aided by the stormy weather which served to conceal his movements, he commenced his attack upon both flanks of the enemy. On the left, he took advantage of a large interval left for the division of Klenau, who were in the act of coming up; but whose troops were too much exhausted to form in line. A heavy cannonade was kept up on both sides. One of the batteries of the Young Guard having slackened its fire, and it being given as a reason that the balls did not tell from the guns being placed too low, Napoleon made answer, 'Fire on nevertheless: it is necessary to occupy the attention of the enemy on that point.'

At this period of the battle, Buonaparte observing a group of persons on horseback at some distance from him, and concluding they were endeavouring to guess at his movements, resolved to disturb them, and called to a captain of artillery to throw a dozen bullets into that group, which might contain some of the enemy's generals. One of the balls struck Moreau, and carried off both his legs. A moment before, Alexander had been speaking to him. A bustle took place among the troops as if some person of consequence had fallen, and Buonaparte having been led to suppose it was Schwartzberg, remarked with an air of complacency, 'It was to him then that the fatal omen of the fire pointed!' Moreau's legs were amputated, not far from the spot. A peasant brought one of the feet with the boot upon it to the King of Saxony, as that of some officer of great distinction who had been struck down by a cannon-ball. But it was not known till the next morning who it was; when a Russian officer told the Emperor that it was General Moreau, to the surprise and mortification of Daru who was with him, and who had hitherto contended that Napoleon had taken up a groundless prejudice against that general. I am not sorry that the blow which extinguished his life was aimed by him whose glory he had thought to dim by envy, and by oppressing the last struggles of a cause whose early triumphs had lent his name a passport to immortality. He who barter his fair fame for the smile of greatness should have his memory pursued with lasting scorn.

The death of Moreau, on whose judgment and reputation great reliance had been placed, is supposed to have had a share in disconcerting the operations of the Allies. Another circumstance of more importance was the presence of Napoleon, which was unexpected. Jomini, another deserter from the French ranks, proposed to redeem the fortune of the day by changing the whole front of the army; but this scheme was thought too daring, so that retreat was resolved

CAMPAIGN IN SAXONY IN 1818

upon. Murat had however thrown himself into the eastern road to Bohemia by Freyberg, and Vandamme blocked up that which led directly up the Elbe by Pirna. The cross-roads therefore only lay open to Schwartzenberg and his army; and these having been rendered almost impassable by the weather, his retreat was disastrous enough. He lost fourteen or fifteen thousand men, who were taken prisoners, and a great number of cannon.

Having seen this triumphant day to a close, Napoleon returned to Dresden on horseback, his grey great-coat and slouched hat streaming with water: but having eaten of some food which was suspected to be poisoned, in addition to his exposure to the weather and continued fatigue for three days, the next day he suffered a severe attack of illness, and was prevented from following up the pursuit in person as he had intended, which led to a series of fresh disasters, and gave a turn to affairs. On the 29th, the King of Naples, Marmont, and St. Cyr were each employed in pressing hard on the columns of the Allies. A corps of about thirty thousand men had been entrusted to Vandamme, of which Buonaparte had such confident expectations, that when complimented on the victory of Dresden, he replied, while his countenance beamed with satisfaction—‘Oh! this is nothing, Vandamme is on their rear—it is there we must look for the great result!’ This general had advanced as far as Peterswald, a small town in the Bohemian mountains, driving before him a column of Russians commanded by Ostermann, who were retreating upon Toplitz. This latter town was the point on which all the scattered and fugitive troops of the Allies were directing their course. If Vandamme could have defeated Ostermann and carried this place, he might have established himself (with his corps of thirty thousand men) on the only road practicable for artillery, by which the Allies could reach Prague; so that they must either have remained cooped up between his *corps d’armée* and those of the other French generals in their rear; or, abandoning their guns and baggage, have dispersed and endeavoured to escape across the mountains by tracks known only to goatherds and peasants. It was a true *trou de rat*; and the only pity is that it failed.

It was on the morning of the 29th that, acting under so strong a temptation as that just mentioned, Vandamme descended the hill from Peterswald to the village of Culm, which is situated in a valley between that town and Toplitz. His plan, with all its untold consequences, seemed to promise every success. Already he grasped his prize in his hand. This single *coup-de-main*, if accomplished, would complete the disorganisation of the Allied Army. The French advanced-guard had got within half a league of Toplitz, when on a

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

sudden Count Ostermann, who had hitherto retreated slowly, halted, and commenced a most obstinate resistance. His troops stood to be hewed in pieces, while Vandamme led down corps after corps to renew the attack, till all his force was collected in the valley between Culm and Toplitz. Ostermann lost an arm in the action, the grenadiers of the Russian guard also suffered severely; but he had gained the necessary time. Barclay de Tolly came up with succours; Schwartzberg sent others; and Vandamme, in turn overpowered by numbers, retired to Culm as night closed. In prudence he should have regained the heights of Peterswald before he halted; or perhaps he expected to be joined by other columns before morning. In the mean time, Barclay and Schwartzberg had collected more of their followers; and at break of day, renewed the attack on the French with a superiority of force, with which it was in vain to contend. Vandamme therefore prepared to return towards the heights of Peterswald, from which he had descended. But at this moment, by a chance of war, the corps of the Prussian General Kleist, who had evaded the pursuit of St. Cyr by throwing themselves into the neighbouring wood, issued out of it, and appeared at the top of the very ridge which Vandamme was climbing. When the Prussians came in sight of the French, they conceived they were placed there for the purpose of cutting them off; and the latter coming to the same conclusion with regard to them, each party being bent on making its way through that opposed to it, the one rushed down the hill, while the other proceeded up it with equal impetuosity and fury, and met half-way with a shock, the confusion and violence of which raged for some minutes, when the Russians, who were in pursuit of Vandamme, appearing in the rear, put an end to this singular rencontre. Generals Vandamme, Haxo, and Guyon were made prisoners, with two eagles and seven thousand men, besides a great loss in killed and wounded.

The effect of this piece of chance-medley was important, and even fatal. The Allies regained all their confidence and spirits, while the French generals were disheartened and afraid of repeating Vandamme's blunder. The advantages of the battle of Dresden were no longer followed up as they might have been. Murat halted at Sayda, Marmont at Zinwalde, and St. Cyr at Liebenau. The head-quarters of the Emperor Alexander remained at Toplitz. Napoleon received the news of this calamity, however unexpected and mortifying, with the undisturbed calmness which was one of his distinguishing characteristics. General Corbineau, who commanded in the desperate charge of cavalry up the hill of Peterswald, presented himself before the Emperor in the plight in which he had escaped from the field, covered with his own blood and that of the enemy, and holding in

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

his hand a Prussian sabre, for which in the thick of the scuffle he had exchanged his own. Napoleon listened attentively to the details he had to give. He then anxiously turned to the instructions to Vandamme, to see if any thing had inadvertently slipped in to countenance the false step which that general had taken. But nothing was found to justify or encourage his advancing beyond Peterswald, though the desire of possessing himself of 'Toplitz might furnish his excuse. 'This is the fate of war,' said the Emperor, turning to Murat. 'Exalted in the morning, low enough before night. There is but a step between triumph and ruin !' He then fixed his eyes on the map which lay before him, took up his compasses, and repeated, in a sort of reverie, some verses bearing an application to his past and present fortunes.¹

CHAPTER I

THE BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

AFFAIRS were going on no better in the north than they were in the south. Indeed wherever Buonaparte was not present to make amends by his unwearied activity and the superiority of his genius for the deficiency of numbers and other disadvantages, the result could hardly be otherwise. On setting out on his return to Dresden (August the 23rd), he left orders for Oudinot to march upon Berlin, and for Macdonald to attack Blucher at Breslau. Both enterprises failed. Oudinot came up with the Crown Prince of Sweden at the village of Gros-Beeren near Potsdam, and was defeated by him and Bulow in conjunction, after a spirited resistance made by Regnier, and with the loss of fifteen hundred men and eight guns. General Girard, also, had sallied from Magdeburg with five or six thousand men in consequence of the removal of the blockading force to join the Crown-Prince against Oudinot ; but after the action of Gros-Beeren, meeting the Prussian brigade returning, an action ensued, to which Czernicheff who came up with his Cossacks put a very unpleasant termination. Macdonald was not more successful ; for going in pursuit of Blucher, who thought the absence of Napoleon at Dresden a good opportunity to seek the enemy, they met half-way on the road to Jauer, before Macdonald was prepared ; his right wing under Lauriston, and his left under Souham, with Sebastiani's cavalry,

¹ ' J'ai servi, commandé, vaincu quarante années ;
Du monde entre mes mains j'ai vu les destinées :
Et j'ai toujours connu qu'en chaque événement
Le destin des états dépendait d'un moment.'

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

being some distance from him. The latter hastening to his assistance, and taking by mistake the same route, five thousand horse and twenty-five thousand foot got entangled in the narrow village of Kroitch ; and Macdonald, unable to stand his ground alone, was defeated before they could come up to save him. Lauriston was fiercely engaged by the Russian general Tauenstein ; and his retreat cut off. The French in these several actions are allowed to have lost fifteen thousand men ; and the army destined to act against Silesia was thus completely disabled.

Buonaparte endeavoured to repair these evils by appointing Ney to succeed Oudinot, with strict injunctions to plant his eagles on the walls of Berlin. Ney accordingly on the 4th of September took charge of the army which lay round Wittenberg, and advanced towards the Prussian capital with a view to execute the Emperor's orders. The troops of the Crown-Prince lay to the left ; and the marshal's object was to avoid any encounter with the enemy, throw himself on the road from Torgau to Berlin, and enter into communication with reinforcements from Dresden. But it was found necessary to pass by Dennewitz, where Tauenstein was stationed, and who might give the alarm to the other corps of the enemy. On the morning of the 6th, therefore, Bertrand was sent forward to attack Tauenstein and draw off his attention, while Ney with the rest of the army pushed rapidly by without being brought to action. But Bertrand having made his appearance too early, notice was given to the allied troops in the neighbourhood ; and before Ney arrived, they were ready to dispute the passage with him. The engagement consequently became general ; and Ney who had had enough on his hands with the Prussians, though the French artillery made dreadful havoc among them, despaired of success when the Swedes and Russians appeared in the field against them. But no sooner had he begun his retreat than this served as a signal of flight to the 7th corps, composed chiefly of Saxons ; and the cavalry of the Allies rushing into the gap, made by their sudden disappearance, the army of Ney was cut in two parts, one of which with Oudinot reached Scharnitz ; the marshal himself making good his retreat upon Torgau, but with the loss of ten thousand men, forty-three pieces of cannon, and the disappointment of the object of his march upon Berlin.

The Allies seemed to avoid Buonaparte himself, as they would avoid the Devil. Having dispatched Ney against the Crown-Prince on the 4th of September, he set out himself in hopes of meeting with Blucher, whose Cossacks had been committing depredations in the neighbourhood of Bautzen ; but that wary adventurer knew better than to trust to an encounter. As soon as Napoleon had turned his back on that city, Wittgenstein threatened Dresden ; and the French Emperor recalled to the Elbe by this circumstance, and by the news of the battle of Den-

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

newitz, came in sight of the Russian general on the 9th. But the Allies, afraid of one of those sudden flashes of inspiration, when Napoleon seemed to dictate terms to fortune, had enjoined Wittgenstein to fall back in his turn. The passes of the Erzgebirge received him; and Buonaparte following him as far as Peterswald, gazed on the spot where Vandamme had met his unaccountable defeat, and looked across the valley to Toplitz where Alexander still had his head-quarters; but proceeded no farther. He returned to Dresden on the 12th, having taken a son of Blucher prisoner in a skirmish on the road; but was soon called back to the Bohemian mountains to the relief of Lobau who was attacked near Gieshubel by a detachment of Schwartzberg's army. In his absence he found that the Prince-Royal was preparing to cross the Elbe, and that Bulow had opened trenches before Wittenberg, while Blucher approached the right bank of that river, insulting his lieutenants and retiring from himself, as was the case again at Hartha on the 21st of September. Napoleon in these circumstances could neither remain at Dresden without suffering the Crown-Prince and Blucher to enter Saxony, nor make any distant movement against those generals without endangering the safety of Dresden, and with it his line of communication with France. The last, as the greater evil of the two, he resolved to guard against as much as possible, by fixing himself at Dresden, which he reached on the 24th. His marshals had orders to draw nearer to the central point, and the right or east side of the Elbe was abandoned to the Allies. He directed Augereau, who commanded about sixteen thousand men in the neighbourhood of Wurtzburg, to join him at Dresden. The Bavarian troops, upon whom Augereau had been a check, deserted not long after. The Allies on their side had just now received their last re-inforcement of 60,000 Russians under Bennigsen. The most of them came from the eastward of Moscow; and among them were to be seen tribes of wandering Baskirs and Tartars, figures unknown to European war, wearing sheep-skins, and armed with bows and arrows; men brought from the very wall of China, to show the narrow range of despotic sway, and stop the overwhelming tide of modern civilization.

The Allies having now collected their utmost strength, and being in numbers greatly superior to the adversary, determined to execute a joint movement, so as to transfer their forces to the left bank of the Elbe; and should Buonaparte persist in remaining at Dresden, to cut him off from his communications with the Rhine. On the 3rd of October, Blucher crossed the Elbe; and driving Bertrand before him, fixed his head-quarters at Duben. The Crown-Prince crossed at Rosslau; and thus both the great armies passed over to the other side, leaving the right bank clear, with the exception of the division of Tauenstein, which

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

still lay before Wittenberg. Ney retired before this unequal force to Leipsic, and Schwartzenberg advanced from the south as far as Marienberg. It was at this period, and in this critical position, that the Emperor received a confidential letter from the King of Bavaria, assuring him that he would hold out six weeks longer against all the allurements that were offered him to desert his cause. On this, Buonaparte finding one grand stroke necessary, both to baffle his enemies and secure the wavering fidelity of his allies, conceived and proposed to his council one of the boldest schemes he had ever thought of or executed. The Allies, by concentrating themselves on the left bank of the Elbe, had left the right side defenceless, with the exception of the inconsiderable force of Tauenstein at Wittenberg. This circumstance did not escape the falcon glance of Napoleon. He proposed, therefore, to change positions with the enemy; to occupy the right bank of the Elbe which they had quitted, resting his extreme left on Dresden and his right on Hamburg; to recover the cities of Berlin, Brandenburg, and Mecklenburg; to deblockade the great garrisons, and add their troops to the main army, and carrying on the war between the Elbe and the Oder from the resources of a country yet untouched, and in his turn becoming the assailant, instead of acting on the defensive, to dazzle and overpower the Allies no less by the daring novelty of his enterprise, than by the addition of solid strength it would afford him. He had already ordered Regnier and Bertrand to cross the Elbe in furtherance of his meditated plan. But the coldness of his marshals, who seem to have thought from this time that there was no safety but in fear, and the defection of the Bavarian troops, of which he was informed by the King of Wirtemberg, put an end to his scheme, and he gave it up, though not without a struggle. He balanced for three days between advance and retreat. At length, he resolved upon retiring to Leipsic; and the orders to Regnier and Bertrand to proceed towards Berlin were recalled. No time was to be lost, and he was obliged to leave Davoust behind him in garrison at Hamburg, Lemarrois at Magdeburg, Lapoype at Wittenberg, and Narbonne at Torgau. Still he did not despair of some favourable chance which might again bring him back to the line of the Elbe. 'A thunderbolt,' he said, 'alone could save him; but all was not lost while a battle was in his power, and a single victory might restore Germany to his allegiance.' *Diis aliter visum!*

Leaving Duben, whither he had gone on the traces of Blucher, who retreated across the Mulda to join the Crown-Prince, the Emperor reached Leipsic on the 15th of October; and received the welcome news that his whole force would in twenty-four hours be under its walls: that the Grand Army of Austria was fast approaching, but that Blucher alarmed by the demonstrations against Berlin would be longer in coming

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

up, so that there might be an opportunity of fighting one army before the arrival of the other. There had already been a skirmish of cavalry, in which Murat had narrowly escaped from a young Prussian officer who was cut down by an orderly dragoon of the King's. The Prussians, it is said, when complimented on their behaviour, replied—'Could we do otherwise? It was the anniversary of the battle of Jena.' It is not a rule in war that the party that is vanquished one time conquers the next. But any thing will serve for the folly of pseudo-patriotism.—The town of Leipsic has four sides and four gates. On the north those of Halle and Ranstadt, on the east the gate of Grimma, and on the south that called St. Peter's, lead out of the city into extensive suburbs. To the west are two rivers, the Pleisse and the Elster, which flowing through marshy grounds, are only passable by a succession of bridges, the first of them leading to the villages of Lindenau and Mark-Ranstadt, and commencing close to the city-gate of that name. This road forms the only communication between Leipsic and the banks of the Rhine. On the east, the river Partha makes a large semi-circular bend, enclosing an extensive plain : on the south is the rising ground called the Swedish Camp, and another called the Sheep-walk, bordering on the banks of the Pleisse. To this quarter the Grand Army of the Allies was seen advancing on the 15th of October. Buonaparte made his arrangements accordingly. Bertrand and Poniatowski defended Lindenau and the east side of the city, by which the French must retreat. Augereau was posted farther to the left, on the elevated plain of Wachau ; and on the south, Victor, Lauriston, and Macdonald confronted the advance of the Allies with the Imperial Guards placed as a reserve. On the north, Marmont was placed between Mœckern and Euterist, to make head against Blucher, should he arrive in time to take part in the battle. On the opposite quarter, the sentinels of the two armies were within musquet-shot of each other, when evening fell. But neither side seemed willing to begin a strife which was to decide the great, the only question—Whether the princes of Europe should be put in a situation to dictate laws and a government to France, or fail (as they had so often and so justly hitherto done) incurring the penalty which they madly and wickedly thought this object was worth, not only of disgrace and discomfiture, but of their own and their people's subjugation?

The number of men who engaged the next morning was estimated at one hundred and thirty-six thousand French, and two hundred and thirty thousand on the part of the Allies. All the accounts assign a preponderating force to the latter of eighty or one hundred thousand men. Napoleon himself visited all the posts, gave his last orders, and took occasion, as he frequently did on the eve of a battle, to distribute

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

eagles to the new-raised regiments. The soldiers were made to swear never to abandon them : and the Emperor concluded by saying aloud, ' Yonder lies the enemy : swear that you will rather die than permit France to be dishonoured.' And they so swore, and they did and would to the last have kept their word, in spite of the superiority of numbers, but for the treachery of their confederates who thought to set themselves free, when indeed they became most slaves ! The greatest preparations for defence were made on the southern side of Leipsic, as the attack on the north was less certain. Rockets were, however, seen ascending in the night, which were supposed to be signals of the approach of Blucher and the Crown-Prince. Napoleon remained all night in the rear of his own Guards, behind the central position, facing a village called Gossa, occupied by the Austrians. At day-break on the 16th of October the battle began. The French position was assailed along all the southern front with the greatest fury. On the French right, the village of Markleberg was fiercely assaulted by Kleist, while the Austrian division of Mehrfeldt making their way through the marshes, compelled Poniatowski to give ground, till the Emperor made Marmont send Souham, who had joined during the night, to his assistance. Marshal Victor defended the village of Wachau against Prince Eugene of Wirtemberg. Lauriston repulsed Klenau. The Allies having made six desperate attempts on these points, all of them unsuccessful, Napoleon in turn assumed the offensive. Macdonald was ordered to attack Klenau and beat him back from Liebertwolkowitz with the cavalry of Sebastiani ; while two divisions proceeded to sustain General Lauriston. This was about noon. The village of Gossa was carried by the bayonet. Macdonald made himself master of the Swedish Camp ; and the eminence called the Sheep-walk was near being taken in the same manner. The impetuosity of the French had fairly broken through the centre of the Allies, and Napoleon sent the tidings of his success to the King of Saxony, who ordered all the bells in the city to be rung, the peal of which mingled with the roar of the cannon. The King of Naples, with Latour-Maubourg and Kellermann, poured through the gap in the enemy's centre at the head of the whole body of cavalry, and thundered forward as far as Magdeburg, a village in the rear of the Allies, bearing down General Rayefskoi with the grenadiers of the Russian reserve. At this moment, while the French were disordered by their own success, Alexander, who was present, ordered forward the Cossacks of his Guard, who with their long lances bore back the dense body of cavalry that had so nearly carried the day. Meantime, as had been apprehended, Blucher arrived before the city, and suddenly came into action with Marmont, being three times his numbers. He in consequence obtained great and decided advantages ; and

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

before night-fall had taken the village of Mœckern, together with twenty pieces of artillery and two thousand prisoners. But on the south-side the contest continued doubtful. Gossa was still disputed. The Austrians of Bianchi's division came on with dreadful outcries : Poniatowski, even with Augereau's aid, had great difficulty in keeping his ground : but Schwartzenberg having pushed a body of horse across the Pleisse to take the French in rear, they were instantly charged and driven back by General Jewel of the Guards, and their leader, General Mehrfeldt, fell into the hands of the French. The battle raged till night-fall, when it ceased by mutual consent. Three cannon-shot fired as a signal to the more distant points, intimated that the conflict was ended for the time, and the armies slept on the ground they had occupied during the day. The French on the southern side had not relinquished one foot of their original position, though attacked by such superior numbers. Marmont had indeed been forced back by Blücher, and compelled to crowd his line of defence nearer the walls of Leipsic.

Thus pressed on all sides with doubtful issues, Buonaparte availed himself of the capture of General Mehrfeldt to demand an armistice and to signify his acceptance of the terms proposed by the Allies, but which were now found to be too moderate ; as all terms would prove to be, that either were or had a chance of being accepted, because there was an ulterior nameless object that drew them on, and from which nothing but despair could wean them. They offered Buonaparte terms which only absolute necessity could make him submit to ; and when that necessity came, they said, ' No, we will have more, namely the original stake we played for ; unconditional surrender of the right of nations to chuse their own government.' Buonaparte thought he could make choice of Count Mehrfeldt as the bearer of a pacific overture with the better grace and more confidence, because, after the battle of Austerlitz, it was the same individual who, on the part of the Emperor of Austria, had solicited and obtained a personal interview and favourable terms from Napoleon. ' Adieu, General Mehrfeldt,' said the Emperor, dismissing his prisoner : ' when, on my part, you mention the word *armistice* to the two Emperors, I doubt not that the voice which then strikes their ears will awaken many recollections.' Many recollections, indeed, ' deep scars which thunder had entrenched,' and which required to have all traces of them wiped out by an erasure as complete as it was un hoped for ! Woe to him who shows and then expects favour from princes ! Napoleon received no answer till his troops had recrossed the Rhine ; and the reason assigned is, that the Allies had pledged themselves solemnly to each other to enter into no treaty with him ' while a single individual of the French army remained

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in Germany ; ' when, there being no fear left for the sacredness of their own soil, they might proceed to violate that of France with impudence and with impunity, nor leave it till they had branded it with the image and superscription of an inborn slavery.

The 17th was spent in preparations on both sides, without any actual hostilities. At eight o'clock on the morning of the 18th they were renewed with ten-fold fury. Napoleon had considerably contracted his circuit of defence, and the French were posted on an inner line, nearer to Leipsic, of which Probstsheyda was the central point. He himself, stationed on an eminence called Thonberg, commanded a prospect of the whole field. The troops were drawn up behind the villages ; cannon were planted in front and on their flanks, and every patch of wooded ground, which afforded the least shelter, was filled with riflemen. The battle then joined issue. The Poles, with the gallant Poniatowski at their head, to whom this was to be the last of his fields of battle, defended the banks of the Pleisse and the adjoining villages against the Prince of Hesse-Homberg, Bianchi, and Colleredo. In the centre, Barclay, Wittgenstein, and Kleist advanced on Probstsheyda, where they were opposed by Murat, Victor, Augereau, and Lauriston, under the eye of Napoleon himself. On the left Macdonald had drawn back his division to a village called Stoetteritz. Along this whole line the contest was maintained furiously on both sides ; nor could the terrified spectators, from the walls and steeples of Leipsic, perceive that it either receded or advanced. About two o'clock the Allies forced their way headlong into Probstsheyda ; the camp-followers began to fly ; the tumult was excessive. Napoleon, in the rear but yet on the verge of this tumult, preserved his tranquillity. He placed the reserve of the Old Guard in order, led them in person to recover the village, and saw them force their entrance ere he withdrew to the eminence from whence he watched the battle. During the whole of this eventful day this wonderful man continued calm, decided, collected ; and supported his diminished and broken squadrons with a presence of mind and a courage as determined as he had ever shown in directing the tide of onward victory. Perhaps his military talents were even more to be admired, when thus contending against Fortune and superior numbers, than when the fickle Goddess, with her countless followers, fought by his side. The Allies, at length, felt themselves obliged to desist from the murderous attacks on the villages which cost them so dear ; and, withdrawing their troops, kept up a dreadful fire with their artillery. The French replied with equal spirit, though they had fewer guns ; and besides, their ammunition was falling short. Still, however, Napoleon completely maintained the day on the south of Leipsic, where he commanded in person. On the northern side, the yet

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

greater superiority of numbers placed Ney in a precarious situation ; and, pressed hard both by Blucher and the Crown-Prince, he was compelled to draw nearer the town, and had made a stand on an eminence called Heiterblick, when on a sudden the Saxons, who were stationed in that part of the field, deserted from the French and went over to the enemy. In consequence of this unexpected disaster Ney was unable any longer to defend himself. It was in vain that Buonaparte dispatched his reserves of cavalry to fill up the chasm that had been made ; and Ney drew up the remainder of his forces close under the walls of Leipsic. The battle once more ceased at all points ; and the same signal having been given as before, the field was left to the slain and wounded.

Although the French army had thus kept its ground up to the last moment on these two days, yet there was no prospect of their being able to hold out much longer at Leipsic. The Allies pressed with an enormous force on the city : the ammunition of the French was nearly exhausted : a corps, which it was hoped might join from Dresden, had not come up ; besides which, Buonaparte had just learned that the Bavarians had gone over to the Allies and meant to intercept his return to France. All things counselled a retreat, which was destined (like the rest of late) to be unfortunate : for when disasters once begin, the hurry and perplexity of mind they create multiplies them. The retreat was commenced in the night-time ; and Napoleon spent a third harassing night in giving the necessary orders for march. He appointed Macdonald and Poniatowski (with whom he parted for the last time) to defend the rear. With day-light the Allied troops strove to pour into Leipsic in pursuit of the retiring army. The King of Saxony sent proposals to the Allies not to enter the city till the French had evacuated it ; and Napoleon was advised to set fire to the suburbs to protect his rear-guard ; but this he refused to do, out of regard to his old and faithful ally. He took a friendly leave of the monarch and his queen, but their interview was broken off by the near discharge of musquetry around them. They urged him to mount his horse and escape ; but before he did so, he formally released the king's body-guard from all ties to himself and France. He parted only just in time ; for the streets were so choked up with the troops, baggage, and artillery, the wounded and the dead, that he found it was impossible to make his way through them, and was obliged to turn down the bye-streets, and, leaving the city through a different gate, gained the brigade of Ranstadt by a circuitous route.

A temporary bridge which had been erected had given way, and the old bridge on the road to Lindenau was the only one that remained for the passage of the whole French army. But the defence of the suburbs

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

had been so gallant and obstinate, that time was allowed for this purpose. At length the rear-guard itself was about to retreat, when, as they approached the banks of the river, the bridge blew up by the mistake of a sergeant of a company of sappers, who, in the absence of his principal, hearing the shouts of the Cossacks and seeing the confusion that prevailed, imagined the retreat of the French cut off, and set fire to the mine of which he had the charge before the proper moment. This catastrophe effectually barred the escape of all those who still remained on the Leipsic side of the river, except a few who succeeded in swimming across, among whom was Marshal Macdonald. Poniatowski, after making a brave resistance, and refusing to surrender, was drowned in making the same attempt. In him, it might be said, perished the last of the Poles. About twenty-five thousand French were made prisoners of war, with a great quantity of artillery and baggage. The triumph of the Allied Monarchs was complete: they had once more made mankind their footstool. They met in the great square, together with that 'base foot-ball player' the Crown-Prince of Sweden, to congratulate each other on the event; and to receive his sword from General Bertrand as commandant of the city. No interview took place with the King of Saxony, who was sent (as a recreant to the cause of thrones) under a guard of Cossacks to Berlin. The bridge which had been destroyed was as necessary to the advance of the Allies as it had been to the retreat of Napoleon, and the pursuit was but slack. However, according to the writers on that side of the question, the great point had been gained, and the liberation of Germany was effected. If so, the contest was at an end, according to the professed objects of the war. But it was only then that the old, the secret, and unalterable ones came into play. '*Their cause was hearted.*' The less formidable Buonaparte became, the more were his enemies bent on his destruction; for the superstructure of power being gone, they came in sight of the foundation—Freedom—a thousand times more hateful to them; and all marks of which they had vowed, with curses and in frantic orgies, to root from the earth!

Meantime, he himself continued his retrograde steps to Lutzen, and thence to Erfurt, which he reached on the 23rd of October. The troops, it is said, soured by misfortune, marched with a fierce menacing air, but his own courage was unabated; he seemed thoughtful, but calm and composed; indulging in no vain regrets, still less in useless censures and recrimination. At Erfurt he counted his losses, which were greater than he expected: heard of new defections among his allies, and parted, for the last time, with Murat, who, under pretence of bringing up forces from the French frontiers, hastily set off for his own dominions. The Poles who were in Buonaparte's army showed a

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

spirit worthy of a people wishing to be free, but therefore (as it should seem) not trusted with freedom. The Emperor gave them their option whether they would adhere to his broken fortunes, or forsake him at this crisis when it might be of advantage to themselves; but they to a man refused to avail themselves of the alternative. He passed two days at Erfurt, where his re-assembled force amounted to about eighty thousand men. These, with eighty thousand more which had been left behind in the garrisons, were all that remained of two hundred and eighty thousand at the commencement of the campaign. Instructions were sent to the commandants, after the battle of Leipsic, to evacuate the fortresses and form a junction with the Emperor; but it is supposed they never received the orders. Most of them soon after capitulated, and the troops were to return to France, on condition of not serving for six months, but they were immediately made prisoners of war by a premeditated piece of treachery; the difference of birth in the contracting parties being doubtless understood to cancel the obligations of justice or honour on one side; and the boasted goodness of the cause of the Allies making up for the bare-faced want of good faith. St. Cyr thus lost thirty-five thousand men at Dresden; and Rapp, nine thousand at Dantzic. After this, Hamburg, Magdeburg, Wittenberg, Custrin, and Glogau were the only places that held out at the end of 1813. A pestilential fever raged in many of these garrisons, filled with the sufferers in the Russian campaign, which was sometimes communicated to the victors.

Buonaparte, while he was recruiting and collecting his forces, received news that his old ally, the Bavarian General Wrede, was waiting for him at Wurtzburg-on-the-Mayne, to intercept his way to France, and that the Austrians and Prussians were closing on his rear, in the direction of Weimar and Laugensalza. Urged by these circumstances he left Erfurt on the 25th of October, in very boisterous weather. Wrede, notwithstanding the inferiority of his force, took up a position at Hanau, where he was joined by some Cossack chiefs. On the 30th the Bavarians occupied the wood of Lamboi, and were drawn up in a line on the right bank of a small river, the Kintzig, near Newhoff. A sharp skirmish took place in the wood, which was disputed, tree by tree, till Buonaparte ordered two battalions of the Guard, under General Curial, to advance in support of the *tirailleurs*, when the Bavarians, at sight of their grenadier-caps, imagining themselves attacked by the whole corps, turned and fled. A successful charge of cavalry being at the same time made on Wrede's left, he found it necessary to retreat behind the Kintzig. The Bavarians kept possession of Hanau, but the high road to Frankfort passing on one side of the town, the necessary line of retreat was left open to Napoleon, who proceeded forward

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

towards the Rhine, leaving three corps of infantry with Marmont to protect the rear-guard of eighteen thousand men under Mortier, which was not yet come up, but which made good their defence the next day against Wrede in a skirmish, in which he himself was wounded and his son-in-law, the Prince of Altingen, killed on the spot. They then hastened to rejoin the Emperor. The French are reckoned to have lost six thousand men in these two actions, and the Bavarians ten thousand. A German miller is said to have performed a signal service in the last day's battle, by turning the water into his mill-stream just in time to prevent a body of French cavalry from pursuing a body of Bavarian infantry, who were in danger of being cut to pieces by them. Buonaparte reached Frankfort on the 30th, which he left to other and to unhallowed guests on the 1st, and passing through Mentz where he stopped for some days, arrived in Paris on the 9th of November.

His return, under these circumstances, raised a crowd of critics and murmurers, who, not to be deceived by a few banners, and an empty parade of four thousand Bavarian prisoners, asked very wisely, 'Why they heard rumours of Russians, Austrians, Prussians on the east, and of English, Spanish, and Portuguese on the south, approaching the inviolable frontiers of the *Great Nation*?' It was the Great Nation itself who asked this, as if they had nothing to do with the title but the honour of receiving it, leaving the task of maintaining it to others. But the reason why they heard these rumours now was that they had heard them twenty years before and ever since, except as they were silenced or kept at a distance (which drew forth all their courage) by him, whose conduct they now questioned, and whose misfortunes they were ready to desert. The Russians did not ask why they heard the report of cannon on the banks of the Niemen: they only asked in their brutish instinct (better than reason that is merely the pander to foppery and cowardice) how they should repel the aggression (right or wrong) to the banks of the Seine: and it was not the tribute of admiration to Russian fortitude or German enthusiasm, that would prevent these nations from overrunning a country too elegant to defend itself in the moment of trial, except by professions of moderation, forbearance, and courtesy towards its enemies, when it could no longer trample upon them as it pleased. Was war a fine thing when the remote shout of victory served these polite talkers and summer-patriots in silk-stockings and with *chapeaux-bras* for something to descant upon with their natural self-complacency? But did it then become quite shocking and barbarous when it came nearer home, and might rouse them from their effeminate ease or cut short a vain-glorious harangue? If it was ambition in Buonaparte, why did they suffer it? If necessary self-defence against systematic and unjust aggression, why

BATTLE OF LEIPSIC

not uphold him in it now more than ever, when the triumph over them was likely to be carried into effect with added rancour and indelible ignominy? Their way was not to stand still and compliment the sacrifices and exertions of foreigners, who had at last (as by a miracle, and from local accidents) rolled back the tide of war from themselves; but to offer them the praise of men, and not of women, by emulating, if they did not mean to be wholly overwhelmed by them. Besides, even the late events showed that without their leader they could do nothing. Wherever he had not been present in the last campaign, the other French generals had been worsted. Where he had commanded in person, he had either obtained signal advantages, or stood his ground still more wonderfully against double his numbers—'frighting the souls of fearful adversaries'—with distrust, shame, and hate in his confederates'. The French nation had only to stand by him to come off victorious; or for the same reason, to sacrifice him to obtain peace with infamy. Let them defend him as long as he had defended them against their enemies, whom by so doing he had made his—and he and France would be *quits*, and leave the world their debtor while the world lasted!

The German troops when they came in sight of the Rhine ran forward and raised a shout of triumph and of filial piety at sight of this guardian stream; but it does not appear that old Father Rhine frowned and murmured a hoarse warning to them never again to forfeit his protection by invading the independence and insulting the liberty of other states—or that they minded him if he did. A whisper from Prince Metternich would have more power to send them on than the roar of all the waters of this parent-flood to stop its valiant sons! The liberation of Germany was easily effected by hastily reinstating her petty princes in their former sovereignties; for it is assuredly much easier to relapse into our old follies and vices than to alter for the better; those who profit by the abuse of power or those who suffer by it being equally attached to it for some unaccountable reason or other. The same reverse of fortune followed everywhere. Prince Eugene was unable to defend Italy or the Illyrian provinces, after the defection of Bavaria opened the passes of the Tyrol to the Austrian troops, and the Croats had mutinied in favour of their former masters. The sea-port of Trieste was taken at the end of October; and the English occupied Ferrara and Ravenna, as the Pope in his newly-inspired love to heretics had wished them to do a few years before, which led to his involuntary trip to France. He was now conducted back with considerable pomp to Rome, amidst the rejoicings of the people, where he was reinstated in his authority (in concert with the Austrians) by that very same Murat, who had before hurried him with such indecent haste and alarming secrecy across the Alps. Ferdinand was about the same time

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

ungraciously released from his confinement at Valençay, and returned to his own kingdom in March 1814, fettered by a sort of treaty which the Cortes annulled (as he soon after annulled the Cortes). It is wished by some politicians to close the account of Spanish affairs here, as if, after all the blood and treasure that has been wasted on this puppet, we ought not to know for what principles and for what persons we have thrown away our birthright and our boasted privilege 'of giving out reformation to the world.' The Duke of Wellington after the battle of Vittoria took the fortresses of St. Sebastian and Pampeluna by storm, and hung upon the French frontier. Catalonia was the only part of Spain that remained in the power of the French, Suchet keeping possession of Barcelona. The rallying cry of Orange-Boven was once more heard at Amsterdam and the Hague; and the liberation of Holland secured by the departure of the French commandant and the arrival of a Russian and an English force. Thus the tide of empire rolled back its reflux course; and the restoration of the ancient landmarks of power and authority, the emerging of altars and thrones from the modern deluge of anarchy and revolution that had confounded and swallowed up all 'time-honoured' distinctions, was compared by Mr. Canning in his place in Parliament to the gradual re-appearance of mountain or promontory after the flood of old—a pretty figure of speech enough, but hardly worth repeating.

CHAPTER LI

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814

'LETTER FROM HAMBURGH, FEB. 26, 1655-6—*The last week, several waggoners coming from Breslau in Silesia, upon their way in the Duke of Saxony's country, perceived a stag with a man upon his back, running with all his might. Coming near the waggons, he suddenly fell down. The waggoners drawing nigh him, the poor man, sitting upon his back, made a pitiful complaint, how that the day before he was by the Duke of Saxony, for killing a deer, condemned to be bound with chains upon that stag, his feet bound fast under the stag's belly, with an iron chain soldered, and his hands so chained to the horns. The miserable man begged earnestly that they would shoot him to put him out of his pain; but they durst not, fearing the Duke. Whilst they were talking with him, the stag got up again, and ran away with all his might. The waggoners computed that he had run in sixteen hours twenty-six Dutch miles at the least, which makes near a hundred of your English miles.*'—NOTE TO THE DIARY OF THOMAS BURTON, ESQ.

I HAVE quoted the above passage as a motto to the present chapter, because I think it a tolerable illustration of the spirit and principles of that doctrine of legitimacy which the campaign of 1814 terminated in re-establishing, and to which I am unhappily no convert. Such

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

was in fact the state of manners and the generally admitted principle of government before the period of the French Revolution, which it was the object of that Revolution to proscribe and sweep forever from the earth, where the prince not only has the power (for that is little) but is also supposed to have the right to inflict all the evil he pleases on every other member of the community, without any provision in the law, in public opinion, or in the spirit of man to resist him—which it was the object of all the wars and bloodshed for the last twenty years to restore, or prevent the infection and spread of the contrary system—and it was the repeated, ignominious, and deserved failure of the Allies to re-establish at the point of the sword this relation between the prince and the subject as being of course and in all cases that of the lawless tyrant and the lawful vassal, that raised such a loud and universal clamour against the ambition and conquests of France; as their triumph was instantly to be signalled (returning to the point from which they set out) by resorting to this very system of hereditary slavery under the name of liberty and independence. That nations who had in the first instance been tamely led on to invade the territories and trample on the rising liberties of a neighbouring state, without the shadow of an excuse or any other warrant than their sovereign's nod, should after a long series of defeat and disaster be brought back to the charge, inflamed with the desire of avenging supposed wrongs and vindicating the national honour, is easily understood. But that France that had abjured and triumphed over this principle of legitimacy should receive it as a gracious boon or as a 'coy, reluctant' pledge and guarantee for the independence and safety of other states, when she had so often been threatened with it as a scourge and under pain of utter extermination and subjection; that she should plead guilty to the charges brought against her as if she had forfeited her existence by her ambition and conquests when nothing else (as was now made manifest) could secure it, and echo the hollow professions of moderation and justice made by her enemies who had given no proofs of their love of independence and freedom but by their hatred of *her* freedom and independence from first to last, I own surprises me, though perhaps it ought not. These things happen; and earth does not roll its billows to swallow up at once the oppressor and the hypocrite, the foul wrong and the fouler pretext! Nor if it excites my contempt that the French submitted to the degrading yoke, does it less excite my grief and anger that it was imposed by a people (taking pride in decking it with *fleur-de-lis* and white ribbons—the colours of base fear) whose hands had been used to other work; a people who had set the primary and (but for themselves) the indestructible example of liberty, and that had shown its

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

spirit and its manhood by choosing a king of its own to protect its rights; but that, like the fabled monster of antiquity with animal head placed on a human form, turned with rage and loathing from the rational and the free, and greedily sought to find out and link itself to the blind and brutal prejudices of ignorance and slavery!

Napoleon had returned to Paris on the 9th of November, 1813; when he immediately set about applying his remaining resources to the best account. Few they were indeed, compared with what they had been; still fewer compared to what they ought to have been (for all France should have risen up as one man on this occasion in defence not merely of her own honour and independence, but of insulted liberty and human nature)—but what he had, he made the best use of. He did not make a secret of the slenderness of these resources, but did all he could to increase or find substitutes for them by art and management—he did not deny the greatness of the danger or the extent of the sacrifices necessary to avert it, openly insisting on these the more to rouse the spirit and indignation of the country; but his manly and noble appeals were coldly answered by a people (or those who represented them) in whom the love of principle is constantly superseded by the itch of change; who after the first flush of enthusiasm or the intoxication of success is over, think it easiest and safest when the tide turns against them, to turn against themselves; and who bear a charm against the disgrace of this (which would make all other nations hang the head in grief and silence) in that eternal principle of self-complacency, that ‘sunshine of the breast,’ which has taken up its favourite abode with them, and which nothing can disturb or abash. It is not (it should seem) becoming in so accomplished a people to brood over an old and odious grudge—instead of fixing the blame on their adversaries, it appeared more candid and courteous to affect to take shame to themselves for all the provocations they had received; and to pacify the wrath of the offended masters of the species by throwing themselves like beaten spaniels into an abject and fawning attitude and licking the feet of those who trod upon them. What all Europe had not done, they did by being wanting to themselves at this great juncture; thus ‘blotting France out of the map of Europe.’ That France, whose name had sounded like a trumpet to the friends and to the enemies of the human race, has sunk into a cypher and a bye-word, for lack of a little of the same fortitude in a just cause which those opposed to it had manifested in a most unjust one. Still it must be allowed that the French are an amiable and polished people:—and the women are even more so than the men!

The first words Buonaparte addressed to the Senate were, ‘A year

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

ago all Europe was marching with us : now all Europe is marching against us.' The practical inference from this was not what he wished. They did not make an answer like the Russians in a similar situation—'Sire, ask all, we give all, accept all.' The style of patriotism is different in different countries. A decree was however immediately issued for levying three hundred thousand men. Engineers were ordered to proceed to the north to restore the old walls, which had formerly been the ramparts of France; to raise redoubts on the heights, as rallying points in case of retreat; to fortify the defiles, and make preparations for destroying the bridges, if necessary. Orders were also issued to the cavalry-depôts, the cannon-foundries, &c. But money was wanting to defray these extraordinary expenses; and Napoleon had recourse to his old remedy, his private funds; and at once and in spite of remonstrances to the contrary, transferred thirty millions in crowns from his own treasury to the public use. Councils of administration, of war, and of finance succeeded each other hourly at the Thuilleries. As the days were too short, Napoleon availed himself of the night, and employed the hours of rest in reading over papers, in signing documents, and in digesting his plans. The army of Germany had just returned to France. It was too feeble and too much impaired in numbers to occupy the whole left bank of the Rhine from Huningen to Holland; and in a military point of view, many persons wished to have it concentrated at once: but the Emperor thought it right to keep up appearances as long as he could. Though but the shadow of what it was, its aspect was still formidable to the enemy; and the negotiations would not go on the worse with the French eagles floating at distant intervals along the opposite bank of the Rhine.

Overtures of peace had just been made. On the 14th of November, the Baron de St. Aignan, the French envoy to the court of Weimar, and who had lately been taken prisoner, arrived at Paris, charged by the Allied Powers to make a formal communication of their views and intentions. The Allies offered peace on condition that France should abandon Germany, Spain, Holland, and Italy, and retire within her natural boundaries of the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Rhine. Thus to give up 'at one fell swoop' not only what he had lost, but what he still possessed, the price of so many victories so justly and so dearly earned, must have cost Napoleon an effort of considerable resolution; but he would gladly have consented, had it been to purchase a solid and cordial peace and the security of France from invasion. But he was to grant all this not in return for peace, but for being allowed permission to treat; hostilities were not to cease, because negotiations had commenced: that is, he was to tie himself beforehand to the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

utmost concessions the Allies could pretend to demand on any general ground, in case they failed in their final attempt to subjugate France by force of arms, and in the teeth of their theophilanthropic professions; while, in case they succeeded, they might spurn the bases they had before agreed to, and dictate what terms they chose in the plenitude of their insolence and power. Buonaparte, however, to please and to give no handle to those who were determined to find fault, acquiesced in these terms, through his new Minister (Caulaincourt) on the 2nd of December; but no sooner had he done so, than he was told that the Allies had thought proper to consult England, which was as much as to say they had a farther game to play. Buonaparte had indeed let fall some hints of maritime rights and independence, which England affected to consider ironical and insulting, flew off at a tangent, and determined to establish the independence of the continent with a still higher hand, *by restoring the Bourbons*. With this view Lord Castlereagh was soon after appointed ambassador to the Congress at Frankfort; a man who, under handsome features and a plausible manner, concealed a mean capacity and a cold heart, and whose only title to distinction consisted in his desire of and resolution to attain it by an unlimited subserviency to power. From this time the negotiations went backward, and peace was another name for slavery. All this while it was pretended to 'require from France no sacrifice inconsistent with her honour or just pretensions as a nation;' ¹ as if to overrun a country with foreign bayonets, in order to impose upon her an hereditary yoke, was consistent with either of these, or as if England, 'who now sat squat like a toad at the ear' of the Allies, would have thought so Sixty Years Since. There is a degree of assurance which, rising with the dignity of the persons, braves the judgment of posterity, and cancels by a breath of its nostrils the records of the past.²

The Legislative Body was convoked for the 2nd of December, but it adjourned to the 19th, in the hope that by that period all the preliminary delays would be at an end, and that the Congress, which was to meet at Manheim, would be opened. But the time elapsed, and nothing was done. The Allies had indeed published a proclamation, in which Napoleon was seriously reproached with the levy of new troops, as a proof of inordinate ambition and bad faith. It was

¹ Speech from the throne.

² Buonaparte accepted the bases proposed by the Allies on the 2nd of December. On the 10th they wrote to say they must consult England. On the 6th Lord Castlereagh arrived at the Hague, and proceeded directly to the head-quarters of the Allies. On the 11th of January no answer was returned; and on the 6th Caulaincourt had presented himself at the outposts, but was not suffered to pass; nor was any answer given up to the 18th of January.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

a sure sign of the modesty of their pretensions, when even to resist them was considered as the height of presumption. In the mean time, Schwartzenberg had entered Switzerland with a large army (in the train of which moved the Allied Sovereigns) in violation of the neutrality of a country which they had so long affected to hold sacred ; but what in others was impiety, was in them religion. Blucher with the army of Silesia threatened to pass the Rhine at Manheim ; and the Crown-Prince of Sweden, with others of the Allies, was advancing through Hanover and Holland. The Duke of Wellington had passed the Pyrenees, and a royalist conspiracy was forming at Bourdeaux and in the south of France. In this state of things the Legislative Body met ; and Buonaparte expected from them zeal and encouragement ; he only received advice and demands for security against himself. He laid the documents relating to the negotiation before them to prove that if he had not been able to procure peace, he had done all he could to procure it with honour ; but they were not satisfied, and wished to throw themselves into the arms of the Allies ; and should they not repay this confidence with moderation and good faith, then to resist afterwards, when having flung away their weapons, no great harm could ensue. Buonaparte soon determined to dismiss a body which was so little in accord with its head ; and on this occasion a scene of violent altercation took place, which went out of the ordinary rules of etiquette, but which was no less called for by the circumstances of the time and the situation of the parties. ‘ I called you together for the purpose of assisting me, but you came to say and do all that was necessary to assist the enemy. Instead of uniting, you divide us. Is it when the enemy are on the frontiers, that you demand an alteration of the Constitution ? Rather follow the example of Alsace and Franche-Comté, where the inhabitants ask for leaders and arms to drive the invaders back. You seek in your address to draw a distinction between the sovereign and the people. I am the only real representative of the people. Which of you could support such a burden ? The throne is merely a piece of wood covered with velvet. I alone hold the place of the people. I am the state. If France desires another species of constitution, let her seek another monarch. It is at me the enemy aims more than at France : but are we therefore to sacrifice a part of France ? Do I not sacrifice my self-love and my feelings of superiority to obtain peace ? Think you I speak proudly ? If I do, I am proud because I have courage ; and because France owes her grandeur to me. Yes, your address is unworthy of the Legislative Body and of me. Begone to your homes. I will cause your address to be published in the *Moniteur* with such notes as I shall furnish. Even if I had done wrong, you ought not to have

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

reproached me with it thus publicly. People do not wash their dirty linen before the world. To conclude, France has more need of me than I have of France. If abuses exist, is it a time for remonstrance when two hundred thousand Cossacks are passing your frontiers? Your visionaries are for guarantees against power; at this moment all France demands only guarantees against the enemy. You have been misled by people devoted to the interests of England; and M. Lainé, your reporter, is a bad man.' ¹

Buonaparte had no better success with the Senate, who only echoed back the word *peace* in answer to his call to arms; and when he proved to them that he had tried to make peace and that the Allies had refused or evaded it on the bases proposed by themselves, they only said, 'Try again, offer them *carte blanche*, any terms they will condescend to accept.' This was the interpretation. Mr. Burke has said, that 'in a contest between equal states, that power must in the end succeed which sets no limits to its exertions but with its existence.' The French (to whom however he applied the remark) are the last people in the world to persevere in such a losing game. They saw that the Allies were determined to carry on the war, and therefore they were determined to give it up, now that it was brought home to themselves. The majority of them remained passive; the worst turned traitors: and it must be confessed that this is a bait which it requires great virtue in so light a people to resist, the temptation at once of breaking their engagements and of making themselves of consequence to the opposite party by doing so. Thus then instead of a union of zeal and devotedness against the common enemy, Napoleon was assailed by murmurs and reproof. It was well known that England had agents and correspondents in different parts of France, and particularly at Bourdeaux; and that she was everywhere endeavouring to revive the hopes of the old partisans of the House of Bourbon. This well became her who had beheaded and exiled her own sovereigns, and whose government existed in contempt of hereditary right. But she thought perhaps to efface or weaken the recollection of the principle at home by stifling it abroad. Besides, she had caroused a drunken pledge—to say nothing of that venomous hate of liberty coiled round the hearts of the possessors of supreme power, ever ready to spring into act and infix its deadly sting, when once the pressure of fear and necessity is taken off.

Some of the usual orators endeavoured to second Buonaparte's spirit and sterling good sense, by contending that the illusions of peace having vanished, the country had but one alternative left, energy or

¹ True enough; this M. Lainé was in correspondence with the English and with Lynch, the Mayor of Bourdeaux, to restore Louis XVIII.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

submission. Regnault de St. Jean d'Angely, in his speech to the Legislative Body, said, 'Surrounded by ruins, France raises her threatening head. She was less powerful, less rich, and less fertile in resources in 1792, when her levies in mass delivered Champagne—in the year seven, when the battle of Zurich stopped a new invasion by all Europe—in the year eight, when the battle of Marengo finally saved the country.'—Napoleon had in his hands the same springs; 'but' (it is added on his own authority) 'they had lost the republican spirit which once tempered them. Most of the chiefs were worn out in the service of their country; but the sacred fire animated the youth of France, and beamed on a few aged heads devoted to glory: this was the last ray of hope!' If the republican spirit was worn out, the anti-republican spirit at least remained in full force: but the spirit of liberty is short-lived, that of slavery immortal. Had the French been a nation composed of wretched serfs and their half-savage proprietors, they would have defended their soil to the uttermost; for slavery is implicit and not sceptical, and barbarism boggles at no difficulties. Were it not for this, the faint ray of hope that gleamed from the aged and the young would have been one consuming and unquenchable flame, withering the hopes that began to swell and riot in the breasts of princes; and liberty would have roused herself once more like a lioness in her old haunts of the passes of the Ardennes and of the field of Valmy, and not have had a deer's heart given her to be always the destined prey of the inevitable, venal pack behind her. But since that was not to be, mankind have become no better than cattle in the market-place!

The year 1814 opened with these frail hopes and gloomy presages. The Emperor neglected no means of intimidating and checking the enemy in his advance. He knew the circumspection and irresolution of the generals opposed to him; and he strove to avail himself of it. He sent orders to the Duke of Belluno to dispute the passage of the Vosges, foot to foot, with Schwartzemberg, and to the Duke of Ragusa to maintain himself as long as possible in the numerous fortresses of Lorraine. By a general instruction issued to all the Marshals they were enjoined, as they retreated, to leave behind them in the fortresses, and in the rear of the Allies, their fatigued troops and those who were not yet inured to the service. Extraordinary commissaries were dispatched to the Departments, for the purpose of superintending the levies of men and the measures of defence. In reading their names, one would suppose that some of them were chosen for the purpose of hindering rather than helping forward these objects. Frequent military reviews took place in the court of the Thuilleries; and the numbers assembled were often doubled by a stroke of the pen

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in the columns of the *Moniteur*. Some critics who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, have grudged Buonaparte these troops upon paper, complaining that they made the Allies afraid of advancing, and apprehensive of having to encounter a national war. Notwithstanding all the activity which he manifested in re-embodiment of the army, he could not hope to open the campaign before the end of January; nor could he reckon on being able to raise more than one hundred thousand men. The enemy spread round him a circle of six hundred thousand troops. The Allied forces were in *échelon* on the three principal lines of communication, leading from Berlin, Warsaw, and Vienna to the Rhine. Napoleon calculated that the enemy, who in three months might have five hundred thousand men in the centre of France, could at most have only two hundred and fifty thousand for commencing the operations of the campaign. Besides, even these forces were diminished by various blockades, and were scattered over different roads. The Emperor therefore had reason to believe, that by manœuvring skillfully in the centre of their march, he might fall in with and defeat the enemy's detached corps. He intended to combine his forces in the plains of Chalons-sur-Marne, before the invading armies should be enabled to effect a junction; and he hoped to make amends for the extreme disproportion of numbers by striking some decisive blow, which would be doubly advantageous in his own territory. He had (beside fifty thousand men on the Elbe, either in garrisons, or detained as prisoners of war, contrary to the faith of treaties, by those who thought more of the inviolability of their persons than of their promises) one hundred thousand on the Pyrenees, opposed to the English and Spaniards; and fifty thousand in Italy under Prince Eugene, who kept eighty thousand Austrians in check on the Adige; and who, if Murat had not proved as great a poltroon as he was a braggart, might have operated in conjunction with him a powerful diversion on the side of Vienna and the Julian Alps. Prince Eugene was also tampered with as Murat had been, but to no purpose. There was something at this time fulsome in the overtures of the Allies to the near friends and relatives of Buonaparte: it seems, that if he had had a son or daughter grown up, it would have given these sleek and pampered moralists peculiar satisfaction to have induced them to betray him. I wish I had the power to mark the spirit of the period with the reprobation it deserves.

'Nothing was sacred then but perfidy.'

It was too late to think of evacuating the fortresses on the Elbe; for all communication had been cut off for a couple of months. There was still time, however, to evacuate Italy, abandon the fortresses on

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

the Rhine, and direct all his forces upon Paris; but Napoleon was averse to the project, probably still clinging in imagination to a more extended scale of operations, though only the confined arena of France 'was left for him to bustle in,' and contented himself with demanding divisions of infantry from Marshal Soult and Prince Eugene, which it was thought might join in the second month of the campaign. He at the same time released the Pope, with a view to throw oil on the troubled waters of the church; and sent Ferdinand back to Spain, in order to lessen the influence of the English at Madrid. He would thus also have two subjects of complaint and odium the less.

The Allies, when they determined on invading France, had conceived that their immense superiority of numbers would sufficiently enable them to encounter the wrecks of the French armies; but from the fury with which the peasantry of Alsace and the Vosges opposed the advance of their detachments in every village, they began to fear the danger of a general rising in France;¹ they therefore endeavoured to conciliate public opinion. The Emperor of Russia published a proclamation, the Prince of Schwartzemberg another, Blucher a third, and so on. A higher compliment cannot be paid to these effusions than by saying that every word and sentiment they contained was belied by the actions and purposes of those who issued them. But while the generals were making their homilies, the soldiers were pillaging and slaying without mercy. Their atrocities (as was but natural) roused the utmost degree of indignation on the part of the country-people. Prince Schwartzemberg found that it was no less necessary to intimidate than to proselytise. He threatened to hang every French peasant who should be taken with arms in his hands, and announced his intention of burning every village that should offer resistance to the invaders. And this threat was to have been carried into execution, no doubt, by those soldiers who had shouted with so much joy when they saw the natural boundary of their own country, the Rhine!

That which the enemy feared and forbade was precisely what was necessary to be done. Napoleon gave orders for the levy in mass of the eastern Departments. General Berckheim was appointed to command his countrymen, the Alsacians. The people of Lorraine and the Franche-Comté evinced the same devotedness as the inhabitants of Alsace. Corps of partizans were organized in the Vosges; on the banks of the Saône the people of Burgundy manifested as much courage as though they had been supported by armies in their rear. The

¹ This may serve to show that the apathy of the Senate and leading people in France was affected and wilful, and that a different impulse (with what different results!) might have been given to the nation.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

inhabitants of Chalons cut their bridge, and compelled the Austrians to halt. Meanwhile, General Bubna had intercepted the road of the Simplon and seized on the Valais. The Duke of Castiglione, charged with defensive measures in that quarter, repaired to Lyons, whither the troops hastily detached from the army of Catalonia and the *départes* of the Alps were proceeding. The enemy had made such progress that it was deemed requisite for Napoleon to oppose them in person. Schwartzenberg had, with some difficulty, forced the passes of the Vosges; Blucher was in Lorraine, Yorck before Metz, and Sacken had arrived at Nancy. The Allied Sovereigns had been on the French territory since the 13th of January, following the route of the Austrian army. The Duke of Ragusa had retired from before Metz, leaving it to be defended by General Rogniat. On the 14th of January, Ney evacuated Nancy, Mortier Langres on the 16th, and on the 19th Marmont was retreating upon Verdun. The defence of Belgium was entrusted to General Maisons, who had to make head against the Prussians under Bulow, the English under Graham, and the Russians under Woronzoff and Winzingerode. General Carnot was appointed to the command of Antwerp. The Duke of Tarentum, after garrisoning the fortresses of the Lower Meuse, fell back on the Ardennes; and on the 19th was at Namur, where Napoleon dispatched messengers to him to hasten his march upon Chalons.

Matters being thus prepared, on the 20th of January Napoleon sent forward the Prince of Neufchatel to announce to the army his intention of immediately joining it. On the 23rd he signed the letters-patent by which the Empress was appointed Regent of France; and the next day, his brother Joseph was included in the Regency under the title of Lieutenant-General of the Empire. That night the Emperor committed all his most private papers to the flames; embraced his wife and son for the last time; and at three o'clock in the morning of the 25th got into his carriage to proceed to the army. It is remarkable that just before he set out he had a long and confidential conversation with one of his ministers,¹ in which he demonstrated the impossibility of his overcoming the Allies from the want of physical means (except by some miraculous chance), said he should try to do his best as much as if he was certain of success; and either overpowered by fatigue or from habitual temperament, fell asleep in the midst of it. Those who were near enough to observe Napoleon since his last return to Paris, found him grave and thoughtful, his not receiving from the Legislative Body the support he expected having hurt him a good deal; but he had lost none of his firmness or self-possession.

¹ Count Molé.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

General Bertrand took his seat in the carriage with Napoleon, in the absence of the Duke of Vicenza, who was gone on a sleeveless errand to the Allies. On the morning of his departure he breakfasted at Chateau-Thierry, and in the evening reached Chalons to dinner. On the road leading to Chalons, the approach of the enemy had produced a kind of stupor which immediately vanished as Napoleon drove along. In the hour of danger his arrival to join the army presented the only chance of deliverance to which the people could look forward. At every relay, crowds of women and children collected round the carriage; and the men who had been formed into National Guards discovered, both by their looks and words, the extreme alarm that prevailed. But dismay soon gave place to confidence; and the peasantry of Dormans, Chateau-Thierry, and Epernay joined to their repeated shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* the cry of *A bas les droits reunis!* thus affording a clue to their secret sentiments. This was recurring to the root of the matter, and touching the right string; which, properly sounded, might have waked in thunder, and shattered one more Coalition. Kings and the people, it seems, remembered what the quarrel was about, the difference on which they had originally split: while the politicians and philosophers in the multiplicity of their refinements had entirely lost sight of the main question.

On alighting from his carriage at the house of the prefect, Napoleon sent for Berthier, the Dukes of Valmy, of Reggio, &c. Twenty years before the Duke of Valmy had gained the title of his Dukedom in those very plains where the national battalions were now again preparing to make a stand against those very Prussians, coming with a different plea in their mouths, but with the same malice in their hearts. 'Oh! and was all forgot?' And had this no power to 'stir a flame of sacred vehemence' in a whole people to repel the final insult, and the last consummation of the long-intended injury? And how had the interval been filled up? With fiend-like acts and saint-like professions, to crush the principles of liberty and restore the ancient despotism under the penalty of endless war to France and Europe; yet now all this was to be submitted to without a blow, and in the prostituted names of religion and humanity! That should be last of all. Really, one would rather 'change one's humanity with a baboon' than not 'mow and jabber' defiance in such a case. But the motto of this people is '*bien complaisant*,' whether in their public or private transactions. To pass on from this sore subject—Napoleon was employed during the greater part of the evening in collecting information from those about him. He learned that Schwartzemberg had nearly reached Troyes, driving before him the Duke of Treviso and the Old Guard; that Blucher had entered St. Dizier; that Ney

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and Victor had retired on Vitry-le-Français; and that Marmont was behind the Meuse, between St. Michael and Vitry. The Duke of Vicenza, after being bandied about at the advanced posts, had at length been permitted to repair to the Congress at Chatillon-sur-Seine. Parties of fugitives, in the direction of Vitry, already began to appear in the streets of Chalons, mingled with the corps just arrived from Paris. The troops that had lately been dispersed along the Rhine, from Huningen to Cologne, after a retreat of twenty days upon so many different roads, now all met together in the same plain to rally round Napoleon and form a single army. The retrograde movement immediately ceased, and order was restored in the ranks.

Napoleon determined to march against that portion of the enemy's force that lay nearest to him. During the night he gave orders for the advance of the whole army on the road to Vitry. He left Marshal Kellermann to receive the Duke of Tarentum, who had been delayed in the Ardennes. He halted only twelve hours at Chalons; and early on the following day (the 26th) the head-quarters were established at Vitry. As soon as he arrived there, anxious to gain information of the enemy's movements, he sent for the sub-prefect, the mayor, the engineer, and the principal inhabitants of the place. Bacler d'Albe and Athalin took notes of every report; and Cassini's map was covered with pins, to mark the different points of the horizon where the enemy's scouts had been seen. Messengers were despatched to the Duke of Treviso to apprise him of Napoleon's route. The troops which had marched during the night at day-break fell in with some of the enemy's columns between Vitry and St. Dizier. The Emperor hastened forward; and at ten in the morning entered St. Dizier at the head of the foremost corps. The Allies had occupied St. Dizier only a few days; though their loud boasting had forcibly impressed the inhabitants with the dangers that threatened France. But these troops now commenced a precipitate retreat at the Emperor's approach. His presence roused the inhabitants of St. Dizier, who gathered round him, endeavouring to touch him, and escorted him in crowds to the mayor's house. *'All were now eager to pursue the enemy, who was no longer to be feared. Enthusiasm spread from place to place, until it reached the villages of Barrois and the forest of Der. The peasantry took arms, pursued the enemy, and brought prisoners to St. Dizier.'*¹ This is too faithful a picture of natural French courage, which shrinks from danger, but takes heart and is ready to gather laurels when the alarm is over. The reports of the prisoners confirmed the statements of the town's-people. Blucher and the corps of Sacken were marching on Troyes by Brienne to join the Austrians: while Yorck's troops had

¹ Baron Fain's account.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

remained behind at Metz, and were expected to follow Lanskoi's corps (with which the French had just had an encounter) to St. Dizier. Napoleon by this first movement had therefore surprised Blücher's army as it was proceeding from Lorraine to Champagne, and had separated it into two parts. Should he now continue his march on Lorraine, to assail the Prussian rear-guard? Or advance directly upon Chaumont and Langres to intercept Schwartzberg? Or descend towards Troyes, in pursuit of Marshal Blücher? Napoleon decided on this last course, to prevent (if he could) the junction of the Prussian and the Austrian armies; to save Troyes, and to aim the first blow at his most redoubted antagonist.

The shortest road from St. Dizier to Troyes lies through the forest of Der; and on this account Napoleon gave it the preference, though difficult at all times, and reckoned almost impracticable in the month of January. At Brienne, however, only two marches off, the army would again enter the high-road. In the evening of the 27th, the army threw itself to the right into the forest of Der; a small rear-guard was left behind; and orders were sent to Mortier to fall back upon Troyes with the Old Guard, so as to be ready to assist the Emperor's movement. On the 28th, it rained heavily; and the army proceeded with difficulty. But the joy testified by the country-people at seeing them was considered as a good omen, and chased away the thought of fatigue. Napoleon halted at the village of Eclaron, while the bridge was repairing. The peasants, who had taken some Cossacks prisoners during the night, kindled fires for the soldiers, and presented them with their whole stock of provisions. Napoleon, when he took leave of the good people of Eclaron, granted them money for rebuilding their church, and the cross of the Legion of Honour to the surgeon of the village, who had served in Egypt. The troops arrived late (from the badness of the roads) at Montier-en-Der, where the head-quarters were fixed at the house of General Vincent, who had resided in the place for several years.

News came in from every quarter. One of the inhabitants of Chavange manifested so much zeal and intelligence, that Buonaparte determined to make him a notary. Blücher had been stopped at Brienne by the destruction of the bridge of Lesmont. His rear-guard was only three leagues off; and at eight, the next morning, General Milhaud's cavalry fell in with them in the wood of Maizieres. The Prussians being driven from the village, the curate came and presented himself to Napoleon, who recollected him as having been one of his old masters at the college of Brienne. The Emperor appointed him his guide; and Roustan, the Mameluke, alighted and gave him his horse to ride. Blücher, in spite of the speed exerted by the French,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

was already in communication with the Austrians by Bar-sur-Aube; and he wished to maintain his position at Brienne till their arrival. He occupied with a strong force the hill on which part of the town stands: some picked troops were ranged on the terraces of the castle. The Russian General Alsmuss defended the lower town. The most determined attack was directed against the terraces of the park by General Chateau, son-in-law of the Duke of Belluno, who carried the position with such promptitude, that Marshal Blucher and his staff had hardly time to escape. Rear-Admiral Basti lost his life in forcing the entrance of the lower town; but his troops, as they ascended the street leading to the castle, fell in with a party of Prussian officers, several of whom were made prisoners, and among others, young Hardenberg, nephew of the Chancellor of Prussia. He stated, that when taken he was surrounded by the officers of the Prussian staff, and that Blucher himself was by his side. This was not the only escape of the kind he had during the campaign. The Prussians attempted to retake the castle; and while the position was thus disputed, the main body of the French army took up their quarters for the night between Brienne and the wood of Maizieres. As Buonaparte was returning by a bye-path to his head-quarters at Maizieres, he was himself surprised and near being taken by a party of Cossacks. At day-break on the 30th, the French were masters of Brienne; and the Prussians were in full retreat on Bar-sur-Aube. The Duke of Treviso, who had returned to Troyes, had orders to cover that city, as well as to advance on the road to Vandœuvre.

The Duke of Bassano, who left Paris some days after Napoleon, now arrived at the Imperial head-quarters. The Emperor was lodged in the castle of Brienne: this beautiful edifice had been plundered by the Prussians, and the windows were shattered by the firing. Napoleon, who had been educated at Brienne, could not suppress the recollections which now crowded on his mind. The evening before, when returning from the battle, he had passed by a tree in the park, under which he remembered having sat and read Tasso when a boy. The injury done to the castle and the burning of the town distressed him greatly. At night when he withdrew to his apartment, he formed the design of rebuilding the town and purchasing the castle, with a view to converting it either into an Imperial residence or a military school. Sleep overtook him amidst these various musings on the past and the future.

As soon as Schwartzemberg heard of the battle of Brienne, he marched hastily with his whole army upon Bar-sur-Aube, and effected his junction with Blucher. At the same time, Yorck had repaired promptly to St. Dizier, to keep up his communication with his general-

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

in-chief. Thus the Allies seemed to display the alertness and impetuosity of thriving wooers of fortune. On the 31st of January, Prince Schwartzberg and Marshal Blücher advanced with their whole forces, and offered battle on the plain between Bar-sur-Aube and Brienne. It was not in the Emperor's power to decline the engagement if he would, the cutting off the bridge of Lesmont (which could not be repaired under twenty-four hours) preventing his retreat, as it had delayed Blücher's advance. The remainder of the 31st was spent in preparations for battle. The commencement of the campaign thus far was not what Napoleon had anticipated. Just when he thought he had surprised Blücher, who was cut off from his rear-guard and reduced to half his force, he had escaped; joined the Austrians; and now challenged him to an engagement, in which he had only fifty thousand men to oppose at least one hundred thousand. The battle which took place on the 1st of February did not tend to improve the aspect of his affairs. The Duke of Ragusa, stationed on the left at Morvilliers, had the Bavarians in front of him: the Duke of Belluno, at Chaumeuil and Giberie, was opposed to the Wurtemberg troops and Sacken's corps: the Young Guard was in the centre at La Rothière, to oppose Blücher's picked troops, together with the Russian guard; and on the right, towards the river, General Gerard defended the village of Dienville against the attacks of the Austrian corps of Giulay. The French army was composed chiefly of new-raised levies commanded by veterans; but throughout the whole day they displayed the utmost intrepidity. In the centre, where the conflict raged with the greatest violence, Napoleon commanded in person; and there also were the Allied Sovereigns. Night put an end to the contest; but the advantage was on the side of the enemy, who only wanted a little more confidence to have become completely masters of the field. At eight in the evening, Napoleon returned to the Castle of Brienne, where he gave orders for the retreat upon Troyes by the bridge of Lesmont, which was hardly finished. While the army effected this movement, favoured by the darkness of the night, the Emperor was not without fear that the enemy might intercept their passage. He every moment made the most anxious inquiries; and stationed himself at a window where he had a view of the whole line of *bivouacs*. The firing of musquetry had entirely ceased; the French fires were burning just as they left them at the close of evening; the enemy made no movement; nor was it discovered till day-break that the French had abandoned their lines. Napoleon left the castle of Brienne at four in the morning.

On the 2nd of February, the French army recrossed the Aube at Lesmont, and cut the bridge a second time to keep off the enemy;

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

but this placed the Duke of Ragusa in a critical situation, who found his old enemy, Wrede, ready to dispute his passage over the Voire at the village of Rosnay. Here, as at Hanau, where he had encountered the same opposition, the Duke of Ragusa drew his sword, and himself gave the word of command: his troops charged with the bayonet, and twenty-five thousand Bavarians were put to the rout. That exploit alone seemed to justify the confidence which Napoleon afterwards placed in the intrepidity of Marmont; but true intrepidity is proved not in facing an enemy or meeting death, but in maintaining a principle. While the Duke of Ragusa was effecting his retreat towards Arcis on the left bank of the Aube, the main body of the army was retiring by the left bank on Troyes, where it arrived on the morning of the 3rd. The Old Guard came out to meet them, formed the rear-guard, and checked the enemy who thought to enter Troyes behind them. Since the departure from Paris, no bulletins had been sent from the army. It was hoped to commence with a victory; it was now necessary to begin with an account of the lost battle of Brienne. Intelligence at the same time arrived from the Duke of Vicenza. The Congress was to meet on the 4th. Count Stadion was to represent Austria; Count Razumowski, Russia; Baron Humboldt, Prussia; and Lord Castlereagh, England. Napoleon dreaded the delays which this mode of treating might occasion; and with a view to shorten them, as well as influenced by the late reverses, dispatched a courier on the 5th with a *carte blanche* to the Duke of Vicenza, giving him full power *to bring the negotiation to a satisfactory issue, to save the capital, and to avoid a battle, on which the last hopes of the nation rested.*

The most favourable news came from the banks of the Saone. The people of Lyons had made a firm stand against General Bubna; so that the troops in Dauphiny having had time to come up, the Austrians fell back on Bresse. Napoleon might have defended Troyes longer; but in the mean time the Allies might turn him and advance on Paris. He therefore determined to continue his retreat, more particularly as at Provins he expected to meet the first division of the reinforcements from the Pyrenees under General Leval. In the skirmishes before Troyes, the advantage was so much on the side of the French, that the Allies thinking Napoleon meditated resuming the offensive, fell back a day's march from Lusigny to Bar-sur-Aube. On the 6th the army quitted Troyes and took the road to Paris. Napoleon slept that night at the village of Gres, half-way between Troyes and Nogent; and the next day reached Nogent, where he halted to dispute the passage of the Seine with Prince Schwartzberg. The evacuation of Troyes and their prolonged retreat gave the finishing blow to the hopes of the army, who were dispirited to an indescrib-

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

able degree. '*Where shall we halt?*' was the question repeated from mouth to mouth. Yet no fault is to be found with the courage of the French army. On the contrary, honour is due to them and eternal praise—they always did their duty, and remained true to glory, their country, and to a cause far above both these names. That stern discipline of humanity seemed necessary to steel the national character (otherwise too light and flexible) to the proper tone of manhood. If I draw a distinction between the French army and the French people, it is to be remembered that the French themselves were the first to disclaim the common link that bound them; and history will scarce see cause to reverse the judgment.—The couriers that arrived at Nogent still brought unsatisfactory news. In the north, the enemy had occupied Liege and Aix-la-Chapelle. The Anglo-Prussian army was blockading Antwerp, which Carnot had arrived only just in time to defend; Bulow had entered Brussels, and Belgium was lost. Blucher was marching on Paris by the great road of Chalons, where General Yorck had appeared on the 5th of February; and the Duke of Tarentum unable to oppose him, had retired on Epernay without knowing where he should be able to halt, and whence he now wrote for orders and reinforcements.

Even Napoleon seemed to lose spirit at this news. He just then too received from Chatillon the conditions which the Allies wished to offer him, and which savoured of late events—and of Lord Castlereagh's influence. He was now told: 'The Allies dissent from the bases proposed at Frankfort. To obtain peace, France must retire within her old limits.' There is a figure in diplomacy, which may be called *encroachment*, and of which the Allies (for persons who stood so much upon punctilio) were tolerable masters. First, it was necessary for France to retire within *her natural limits*; then she was to have *her old limits*; next it would be *her old government*. That would indeed be coming to the desired conclusion; she could sink no lower! Having read the dispatches, Napoleon shut himself up in his chamber, and observed a mournful silence. The Allies demanded a prompt and categorical reply. The Prince of Neufchatel and the Duke of Bassano went to him, and with painful emotions hinted at the necessity of yielding. 'How!' he at length exclaimed, 'can you wish me to sign this treaty, and thereby violate my solemn oath? Unexampled misfortunes have torn from me the promise of renouncing the conquests that I have myself made: but, shall I relinquish those that were made before me? Shall I violate the trust that was so confidently reposed in me? After the blood that has been shed, and the victories that have been gained, shall I leave France less than I found her? Never! Can I do so without deserving to be branded as a

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

traitor and a coward? You are alarmed at the continuance of the war; but I am fearful of more certain dangers which you do not see. If we renounce the boundary of the Rhine, France not only recedes, but Austria and Prussia advance. France stands in need of peace: but the peace which the Allies wish to impose on her would subject her to greater evils than the most sanguinary war. What would the French people think of me, were I to sign their humiliation? What could I say to the Republicans of the Senate when they demanded their barriers of the Rhine! Heaven preserve me from such degradation! Dispatch an answer to Caulaincourt, if you will: but tell him that I reject the treaty. I would rather incur the risks of the most terrible war.'

Having thus given vent to his feelings, Napoleon threw himself on his camp-bed. The Duke of Bassano spent the rest of the night beside his couch; and profiting of the first moment of subsiding passion, he obtained permission to write to the Duke of Vicenza in such terms as authorised him to continue the negotiation. Napoleon gave orders for the enemy's conditions to be transmitted to Paris for the members of the Privy Council to give their opinions upon them. All, except one (Count Lacuée de Cessac), were unanimous for accepting them.

Blucher had entered the Bric-Champenoise, and was advancing by forced marches. The Duke of Tarentum had retired upon Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and the fugitives were entering Meaux. This bold incursion of the enemy roused Napoleon. He resolved to make the Prussians pay for their temerity; and he formed the design of unexpectedly falling on their flank. Napoleon was poring over his maps, with his compasses in his hand, when the Duke of Bassano came in with his dispatches. 'Oh! here you are,' said the Emperor; 'but I am now thinking of something very different. I am beating Blucher on the map. He is advancing by the road of Montmirail; I will set out and beat him to-morrow. I shall beat him again the day after to-morrow. Should this movement prove as successful as I expect it will, the state of affairs will be entirely changed, and we shall then see what can be done.'

There was no post-road between Troyes and Chalons; and the road from Nogent to Montmirail, by way of Sezanne, a distance of twelve leagues, was accounted by the country-people hardly passable. But this did not alter Napoleon's design. He left General Bourmont and the Duke of Reggio behind him, to keep the Austrians in check, and set forward on his second expedition against the Prussian army. On the evening of the 8th, the Imperial Guard proceeded to Villenoix; and on the 9th, Napoleon with the main body of his force reached

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

Sezanne. Some Prussian cavalry were seen between Sezanne and Champaubert, and the enemy were marching in perfect security beyond La-Ferté. A deep valley, the marsh of St. Gond, and a number of woods and defiles interposed between the French and the enemy, and made it difficult to bring up the artillery. The Duke of Ragusa, who led the vanguard, turned back, but Napoleon ordered him to resume his march, and applying double means to overcome double obstacles, that is, by employing double the number of horses, every thing succeeded to his wish. On the morning of the 10th the Duke of Ragusa, under Napoleon's eye, drove the Prussians from the village of Baye; and in the afternoon the rest of the army arriving at Champaubert, completely routed the columns of General Alsufieff; driving one part of them in the direction of Montmirail, and the other on Etoges and Chalons. Napoleon took up his abode in a cottage at the corner of the village of Champaubert, where he had the enemy's generals who were taken prisoners to dine with him, and sent off an express to Caulaincourt that things were going on better, and that France might assume a less humble attitude at the Congress.

The Duke of Ragusa was left to keep Blucher in check, who had not got beyond Vertus, while Napoleon advanced in pursuit of Generals Yorck and Sacken who were between him and the capital. The troops of Blucher and Schwartzenberg were running a race to Paris: to be the first to enter the capital was the great object of their endeavours, as it had been the sole thought and desire of their employers for the last twenty years. It is no wonder they were eager to get there, and set the seal of the most unlooked-for success on the most odious, barefaced, and persevering attempt that had ever been made against the rights and happiness of mankind. Then so many wars would not have been undertaken in vain, so many defeats rashly incurred, so many mortifications submitted to unrevenged, to prove that kings were all-in-all, and the people nothing. There must be the place of meeting and of the grand gaol-delivery of crowned heads. There must be scared away the apparition of the Revolution that like an incubus had so long haunted the dreams of monarchs. There must be blotted out the maxim that 'for a nation to be free, it has only to will to be free.' There monarchs might once more show their heads and be hailed as Gods of the earth, on the very spot where one of them had fallen down dead like a common traitor and felon; and sycophants and slaves thenceforth laugh loud when the name of liberty was mentioned!—The Prussians contrived to keep the start in this praiseworthy competition. General Yorck was already within sight of the spires of Meaux; the Russian general Sacken was at La-Ferté. Two marches more, and he would bivouack at the foot of Mont-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

martre ! But the Prussians suddenly halted at a summons from the Russians, who had learnt the news of the battle of Champaubert. Their columns fell hastily back, and the French army came up with them on the 11th. The advanced-guard which issued from Montmirail, stopped the Russians and Prussians returning along the Paris road, and a sanguinary conflict immediately began. At three in the afternoon the Duke of Treviso rejoined the army with the Old Guard by the direct road from Sezanne. Then Napoleon gave the orders for a general and decisive attack. On the right of the road, looking towards Paris, Ney and Mortier placed themselves at the head of the Guard, and carried the Ferme-de-Grenaux, round which the enemy had strongly posted himself ; on the left, General Bertrand and the Duke of Dantzic came to the assistance of General Ricard who had been fighting hard since the commencement of the battle in the village of Marchais. The Russians and Prussians then gave up the attempt to force a passage by Montmirail, and retired across the fields to Chateau-Thierry, in the hope of regaining a communication with Blucher that way along the banks of the Marne. Napoleon slept that night at the Ferme-de-Grenaux, where, the dead bodies having been removed, the head-quarters were established.

On the 12th the enemy were hotly pursued, and sabred in the very streets of Chateau-Thierry. Their projected retreat on Chalons was cut off, and they were obliged to pursue their way through the town, northward to Soissons. Napoleon arrived on the heights which command the valley, while the engagement was going on, and passed the night in a little detached country-house near the village of Nesle. In the morning he proceeded to the town, and fixed his residence at the Post Inn. Several Prussians were found concealed in the house. The Allies had behaved most shamefully at Chateau-Thierry : and *on their retreat* the inhabitants vented the utmost indignation against them. The women laughed and wept by turns ; and it is said, were seen wreaking their revenge by throwing the wounded Prussians, who were lying on the bridge, into the river. Like enough. They wanted another Danton, a second 1st and 2nd of September to ‘screw their courage to the sticking-place.’ What was become of the so famous *Tricoteuses* ? Were they metamorphosed into so many Marshals’ ladies, who were only afraid that their husbands might be worn out in the wars ? Or that, having been now so long deprived of the daily processions of the *Guillotine*, they might also by all this tiresome marching and counter-marching, be defrauded of the sight of the entrance of the Allies into Paris ? Alas ! the bad passions work out their own ends by their proper energy : the good only succeed by borrowing the aid of the worst ! Napoleon, in constant pursuit of

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

the enemy, was struck on all sides with scenes of devastation and misery. He filled the columns of the *Moniteur* with the complaints and lamentations of the wretched inhabitants of Montmirail, of Troyes, of La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and Meaux. In vain! The examples he held out to them of resistance to a foreign foe, whether in antiquity, the recent ones of their enemies, or their own in 1792, instead of stirring up the spirit of emulation, served only to deter an effeminate and thoughtless people: they recoiled from the picture of the horrors of war, shut their eyes to it, and only held out their hands more eagerly and wildly in token of peace with those who had committed them. Napoleon published two decrees, authorising the inhabitants to take up arms and join the troops at their approach, and denouncing the punishment of traitors against the mayors or public functionaries who attempted to repress this general movement. But without effect. The inhabitants of the places which the Allies had passed through came indeed to Napoleon and said, 'You were right, Sire, in recommending us to rise in mass: death is a thousand times preferable to the insults, the hardships, and the cruelties to be endured by those who submit to a foreign yoke.' But there was no fellow-feeling throughout the country, nor any deep and burning sense of shame or of revenge. Thus neither fear nor hatred nor glory nor liberty had any influence on a people wrapped up in ease and self-opinion; and who, incapable of feeling any intolerable pang from the thought of being conquered, had neither pride nor fortitude to meet the danger, and only sought to avoid the immediate evil in the shortest and cheapest way possible. They had one man capable (and alone capable) of defending them; but him, for that reason, they regarded with jealousy and dread, as timid persons do not like to have a sword put into their hands.

Being for the present rid of one portion of the Prussian army, Napoleon on the 13th retraced his steps to go in quest of the other half, which he had left between Chalons and Champaubert. He gave his last orders to the Duke of Treviso, who was pursuing the fugitive corps of Sacken and Yorck in the direction of Soissons; and stopped to arm the national guards of La Vallée with the musquets of the Prussians, with which the roads were covered. He then mounted his horse at midnight to overtake his guard and rejoin the Duke of Ragusa, who was retreating from Champaubert, followed by Blucher, who had summoned to his aid the corps of Kleist and Langeron. On the 14th Marshal Blucher was on the point of entering Montmirail, when Marmont suddenly faced about in the plain of Vauchamps; and the troops from Chateau-Thierry being now arrived, the enemy perceived the whole French army drawn up behind the Duke of Ragusa and

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

ready to give battle. At eight in the morning, the shouting of the soldiers announced the presence of the Emperor, and the battle commenced.

Marshal Blucher at first would have declined the engagement, but it was out of his power. He covered his retreat by manœuvring his infantry, but the charges of French cavalry broke all the squares that were opposed to them; and, after a great deal of hard fighting, his retreat became a flight. Several times in the course of the evening Marshal Blucher, surrounded by his staff, defended himself with his sabre, and he owed his escape principally to the darkness, which prevented his being recognised. From the field of Vauchamps Napoleon returned to pass the night at the castle of Montmirail.

Six days had scarcely elapsed since the Emperor quitted Nogent; but Prince Schwartzemberg having succeeded in passing the Seine in the interim, his presence was again demanded in that quarter; and consigning the Prussians to the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa, he set out, followed by his indefatigable Guard and the corps of the Duke of Tarentum. While search was making for a paved road, he sent word to the Dukes of Belluno and Reggio that on the following day he should debouch in their rear by Guignes. The Imperial head-quarters arrived late at Meaux on the 15th, and on the same night bulletins were forwarded to Paris with an account of the news of the week, which were soon followed by a column of eight thousand Russian and Prussian prisoners, who defiled on the Boulevards before the eyes of the wondering inhabitants of Paris. But neither battles gained nor convoys of prisoners could restore the confidence of the Parisians. They had been accustomed to sit, as in a theatre, and enjoy the roar of victory at a safe distance; but when this grand drama of war was turned to serious earnest and brought home to themselves, they did not at all know what to make of it. It was no part of the agreement that they were to be exposed to its vicissitudes. They had bargained for a war on paper, of bulletins or telegraphs: the whizzing of bullets was quite a different thing. When, therefore, reverses came, they thought it a breach of compact, and wished to shift a responsibility which they had never contemplated from themselves to their leaders. They were naturally almost beside themselves, when they found Schwartzemberg at Nangis, Wrede and Wittgenstein entering La Brie, that Sens had been forced, that Bianchi's Austrian corps were marching on Fontainebleau, and Platoff's Cossacks spreading desolation between the Yonne and the Loire.

Early on the 16th Napoleon quitted Meaux to proceed to Guignes, crossing by Crecy and Fontenay. The inhabitants lined the road with carts, by the help of which the soldiers doubled their distances;

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

and the firing of cannon being heard, the artillery drove on at full speed. An engagement had been obstinately maintained since noon by the Dukes of Belluno and Reggio, in the hope to keep possession of the road by which Napoleon was expected: an hour later the junction of the forces would have been difficult. The arrival of the Emperor restored full confidence to the army of the Seine. That evening he contented himself with checking the Allies before Guignes; and the next morning the troops were seasonably reinforced by General Treillard's dragoons, who had been detached from the army in Spain. Couriers dispatched to Paris entered the suburbs escorted by crowds of people who had anxiously assembled at Charenton. On the 17th the troops quitted Guignes and marched forward. The Allies instantly knew that Napoleon was returned. General Gerard's infantry, General Drouet's artillery, and the cavalry of the army of Spain did wonders. The enemy's columns were driven back in every direction, and left the road between Mormars and Provins covered with the slain. The Duke of Belluno had orders to carry the bridge of Montereau that same evening; and the Imperial guard bivouacked round Nangis, the Emperor sleeping at the castle.

In the course of the evening one of those indecent lures by which he was too often inveigled arrived in the shape of a demand for a suspension of hostilities, brought by Count Parr from the Austrians. He availed himself of this opportunity of transmitting a letter from the Empress to her father and of writing one himself. It is strange that Napoleon ever trusted in the least to this forced connection to screen him: it was rather an aggravation and consummation of his demerits. Not ten daughters would have interposed between Francis and that Imperial diadem which a soldier of fortune had plucked from his brow, and which fate seemed now inclined to restore to him. The father would not even plead to the monarch; but rather seek the reparation of both their wrongs. Napoleon at the same time, however, had spirit to write to Caulaincourt to revoke his *carte blanche*, saying it was to save the capital, but the capital was now saved; that it was to avoid a battle, but that the battle had been fought, and that the negotiations must return to the ordinary course. The Allies had the assurance to reproach Buonaparte with this, as a receding from his word according to circumstances, when they themselves encroached upon him with every new advantage and every hour, as fast as the drawing aside the huge veil of hypocrisy would let them.

On the 18th Napoleon was vexed to find that the Duke of Belluno was not yet in possession of the bridge of Montereau, on which so much depended. He presented himself before it in the morning, but the Wurtemberg troops had established themselves there during the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

night. Napoleon ordered forward the Bretagne national guard and General Pajol's cavalry. General Gerard came up in time to support the attack, and Napoleon himself arrived to decide the victory. The troops took possession of the heights of Surville, which command the confluence of the Seine and the Yonne; and batteries were mounted which dealt destruction on the Wurtemberg force in Montereau. Napoleon himself pointed the guns. The enemy's balls hissed like the wind over the heights of Surville. The troops were fearful lest Napoleon, giving way to the habits of his early life, should expose himself to danger: but he only said, 'Come on, my brave fellows, fear nothing, the ball that is to kill me is not yet cast.' The firing redoubled; and under its shelter the Bretagne guards established themselves in the suburbs, while General Pajol carried the bridge by so vigorous a charge of cavalry, that there was not time to blow up a single arch. The Wurtemberg troops, enclosed and cut to pieces in Montereau, vainly summoned the Austrians to their aid. This engagement was one of the most brilliant of the campaign. Their success encouraged the troops, roused the country-people, and stimulated the ardour of the young officers; but nothing could revive the spirits of the veteran chiefs. Hope does not return twice to the human breast. Several of the most distinguished officers (perhaps from contrasting their present successes with their past exploits) were most depressed.

Napoleon could no longer repress his dissatisfaction. He reproached General Guyot in the presence of the troops, with having suffered the enemy to surprise some pieces of artillery the preceding evening. He ordered General Digeon to be tried by a council of war for a failure of ammunition on the batteries: but afterwards tore the order. He sent the Duke of Belluno, who had suffered the Wurtembergers to surprise the bridge of Montereau before him, permission to retire; and gave the command of his corps to General Gerard, who had greatly exerted himself during the campaign. The Duke repaired to Surville to appeal against this decision; but Napoleon overwhelmed him with reproaches for neglect and reluctance in the discharge of his duties. The conduct of the Duchess was also made a subject of complaint: she was Lady of the Palace, and yet had withdrawn herself from the Empress, who, indeed, seemed to be quite forsaken by the new court. The Duke could not for some time obtain a hearing: the recollections of Italy were appealed to in vain; but, mentioning the fatal wound which his son-in-law had received in consequence of his delay, the Emperor was deeply affected at hearing the name of General Chateau, and sympathised sincerely in the grief of the Marshal. The Duke of Belluno resuming confidence, again protested that he would never quit the army: 'I can shoulder a musquet,' said he:

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

‘I have not forgotten the business of a soldier. Victor will range himself in the ranks of the Guard.’ These last words completely subdued Napoleon. ‘Well, Victor,’ he said, stretching out his hand to him, ‘remain with me. I cannot restore the command of your corps, because I have appointed General Gerard to succeed you; but I give you the command of two divisions of the Guard; and now let every thing be forgotten between us.’

Napoleon slept on the 18th at the castle of Surville, where he passed the following day, when the magistrates of the neighbouring districts assembled at the head-quarters, and he found himself surrounded by as many tri-coloured scarfs as epaulets. He dispatched orders on the different roads for incessantly harassing the enemy's columns in their retreat, and pursuing them towards Troyes. The Emperor conceived that this was the favourable moment for bringing forward the army of Lyons, by the help of which he hoped to cut off the enemy's retreat, and render the late successes decisive. But this hope was extinguished by the treason of Murat, who had just then lifted the mask and joined the English and Austrians, so that the Viceroy could not spare the promised reinforcements, and by the lukewarmness of Augereau in making use of the troops he had under his command. The cannonade of the 18th had been heard at Paris, and care was taken to satisfy the public mind, by sending the standards taken at Nangis and Montereau to be presented to the Empress. On the 20th, Napoleon, with the main body of his forces, proceeded along the left bank of the Seine to Nogent. He breakfasted at Bray, in the house which the Emperor of Russia had quitted the preceding day; and in the evening entered Nogent with the Duke of Reggio's corps, which had arrived from Provins. Nogent had suffered dreadfully in the obstinate attempt made by General Bourmont to resist Prince Schwartzemberg's passage of the Seine on the 10th, 11th, and 12th. During these disasters, the sisters of La Charité at Nogent had continued in their hospital to succour the wounded. Napoleon had them introduced to him, thanked them in the name of the country, and presented them with a hundred Napoleons from his private purse. On the morning of the 22nd he renewed his march in pursuit of the Allies. As their columns entered the high-road, the accumulation of their forces, instead of increasing their strength, only added to their disorder. Alarm spread on all sides, and the passes of the Vosges were covered with waggons, wounded, and fugitives, as far back as the Rhine. A hundred thousand men were flying before Napoleon, who had not forty thousand to pursue them. Meanwhile, there was noticed on the left a corps of the enemy, which appeared not to move in the general retreat, and advanced up to the gates of the little town

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

of Mery. General Boyer, who repaired thither with a division of the Guard, met with an unexpected resistance at the bridge; nor did the enemy abandon his position till the town was reduced to ashes. The French were at a loss to divine who this could be; they at first thought it was Wittgenstein; but it turned out to be Blucher, who had made this bold recognisance to learn what had become of Schwartzberg, and who soon after withdrew across the Aube at Baudemont or Anglure. The army halted at the hamlet of Chartres, where Napoleon slept on the night of the 22nd in a labourer's hut.

On the morning of the 23d, Prince Lichtenstein arrived (always a fatal omen to defeat the fruits of victory) with pacific overtures from the Austrian camp. He brought an answer to the letter which Napoleon had written to his father-in-law; and he acknowledged the weight of the blows which the French general had dealt the Allies. The latter mentioned the reports in circulation respecting the new designs entertained against his person and government; and asked whether, conformably to the favourite plan of England, the idea of restoring the Bourbons was cherished? But why ask if they now entertained a design, which had never quitted them for twenty years? *There needed no ghost to tell him that*; particularly, when the Duke d'Angouleme was with the English in the south, the Duke de Berri at Jersey, and the Count d'Artois in Switzerland, close at the heels of the Allies. But Napoleon unaccountably chose to trust to the Prince of Lichtenstein's assurances and to the Emperor of Austria's attachment to him, as if he did not love himself better than his daughter; or as if that very affection for her would not lead him to restore her, as far as it could be done, to her inborn dignity, and cancel her marriage as a *misalliance*, in itself both violent and void! The Emperor was lulled by these flattering appearances into the hope of peace, and prevailed on to grant an armistice. The Baron St. Aignan at the same time arrived from Paris, with an account that the citizens were more alarmed at his victories than his defeats, thinking it would but prolong the war, and all they wanted was to submit. 'Sire!' said M. de St. Aignan, under the complete influence of this patriotic contagion, and inspired with the boldness of cowardice, 'the speediest peace will be best!'—'It will be speedy enough, if it be dishonourable,' replied Napoleon, whose countenance was clouded with displeasure. These words were soon repeated from mouth to mouth; he mounted his horse, and all pursued the road to Troyes.

The army arrived before Troyes in the afternoon of the 23rd; but did not enter it till the next day, the Russians retiring during the night after committing great excesses. Buonaparte was met with the most enthusiastic acclamations by the inhabitants, among whom there

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

was a contention who should first touch his boots or kiss his hand ; and also with complaints of those who, during the residence of the Allies, had not shown the same zeal and had even hoisted the white cockade. Napoleon had scarcely alighted when he threw his gloves on the table, and with his whip still in his hand called a council of war. Notwithstanding what had been said by the Austrian envoy, the restoration of the Bourbons had become a *sine qua non* with the Allies ; and the head of their house, Louis XVIII., had already contrived, from the bosom of his retreat at Hartwell, to get his addresses, his insinuations, his pardons, and his promises circulated in Paris. To be sure. Without this climax the whole would have been the termination of a vulgar warfare, and they would have left off just where they began : empires would have been shaken and seas of blood have flowed to no purpose ; but this was an object of a higher order, and to which still greater sacrifices would only add a loftier sanction and a more religious awe—not a question of the boundary of states by this or that river or mountain, but the grand distinction of the everlasting boundary and impassable line of demarcation between kings and the people, whether they should sit on thrones, linked to the skies and overshadowing the earth, or whether they should be supposed to reign not by divine right and by an inherent majesty of nature, but solely for the good and by the consent of the people ? This was indeed a question to stir all the pride and vengeance of monarchs, all the baseness and servility of slaves, all the spirit and resentment of the free ; and this alone could account for the lengthened convulsion, ‘ the dread strife ’ that had already taken place, and that was now about to terminate in so happy a *euthanasia* ! Under these circumstances, it became necessary to repress the spirit of disaffection by making examples : two individuals were particularly named : one of them (Vidranges, an old royalist) escaped by flight ; and the other (Govant) would have escaped too, could the family have obtained access to the Emperor in time ; but the sentence of the law was already executed. So preposterously averse was Buonaparte to the shedding of blood (except in the field of battle) that he seemed to regard every other death as no better than a legal murder. The Allies, by proposing the armistice at Lusigny, merely wished to shuffle and gain time : Napoleon, in consenting to it, was desirous of keeping Antwerp and the coasts of Belgium as the reward of his late successes. The French army had not, however, lost an instant in pressing hard upon the Austrians. The enemy’s head-quarters had fallen back as far as Colombey ; the Russian guard had retreated on Langres, and Lichtenstein’s corps on Dijon. The Allied Sovereigns had retired to Chaumont in Bassigny, and the French troops were taking possession of Lusigny at the very

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

moment when the commissioners for the armistice assembled there. Difficulties arose respecting the line of the armistice; which caused more delay. While these points were settling, the horizon was thickly overcast, and the critical period of the campaign approached.

The Prussian corps of Bulow and the Russian divisions of Winzingerode and Woronzoff, after having over-run Belgium, had pushed on their advanced-guard as far as the gates of Soissons. General Rusca, who commanded there, was killed by one of the first shots that were fired; and in consequence of his death the place speedily surrendered to General Winzingerode. The Russians entered it the 13th of February, precisely in time to rally the flying remains of Sacken and Yorck, escaped from the battle of Chateau-Thierry the preceding day. These troops shortly after effected their junction with Blucher by the way of Rheims. The Russians were still desirous to keep possession of Soissons, but that town was retaken by the Duke of Treviso on the 19th of February. On the 18th, Marshal Blucher finding himself in a state to hasten in his turn to the assistance of Schwartzemberg, marched from the banks of the Marne, and encamped with fifty thousand men at the confluence of the Aube and the Seine. He had been strengthened on his route at Sommesons by reinforcements of nine thousand men of Langeron's corps; and he trusted that a general junction of the Allied forces before Troyes would stop Napoleon, and produce the same results as at Brienne. It was not consequently a single detachment of the army of Silesia which had appeared at Mery, but the vanguard of the whole of that army. Blucher had in person taken part in the action and was wounded. He did not determine on retreat till convinced with his own eyes of the impossibility of rallying Schwartzemberg's army before Troyes. He then re-passed the Aube; but his retreat concealed one of the boldest plans of the campaign. He resolved to advance again upon Paris, and attempt a grand diversion in favour of the Austrian army. Thus while the main body of the French army was in the vicinity of Troyes, occupied with the armistice and peace, the Prussian troops made a rapid descent along the two banks of the Marne. The Dukes of Ragusa and Treviso, the one from Sezanne, the other after leaving a garrison in Soissons, both retreated on La Ferté-sous-Jouarre.

This intelligence did not reach Napoleon till the night between the 26th and 27th: it changed all his plans in the course of a few hours. In the morning of the 27th, he marched hastily from Troyes in pursuit of the Prussian army, leaving two corps with the Dukes of Tarentum and Reggio, charged to limit their efforts to keeping Schwartzemberg in check; and above all, to mask the movement which the army was making on Blucher. With that view, the Duke of

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

Reggio and General Gerard, being engaged with the enemy, caused the acclamations to be raised along the line, which commonly signalized the arrival of Napoleon. These shouts were heard by the opposite line; and while Buonaparte was retiring by forced marches from Troyes, Schwartzenberg believed that he had just joined the army. On the 27th, about noon, Napoleon arrived at Arcis-sur-Aube: he stopped a few hours at the seat of M. de la Briſſe, to let the troops pass the Aube. They then turned by the cross-road to Sezanne, and at night bivouacked not far from La Fere Champenoise. Napoleon spent the night in the house of the curate of the little village of Her. Here French gaiety shed a momentary light on the gloom of the period; and converted this evening-party into a scene of festivity and mirth. The curate engaged in a Latin dispute with Marshal Lefevre. The officers got round his niece, who entertained them with singing canticles. By this time the mule arrived with provisions. The curate was at a loss to comprehend how his guests were so well acquainted with the neighbouring country, till they showed him Cassini's map, which each of them had in his pocket. The repast being ended, every one shifted for himself in the adjacent barns. The next morning Napoleon was on horseback while the curate was still asleep: but when he awoke, to console him for not having taken leave, he was presented with a well-filled purse by order of the Grand-Marshal.

On the march Napoleon, with some light troops, attacked a corps of the enemy under Tettenborn, that had been sent as scouts and had passed the night near the French bivouacks at La Fere Champenoise. The army halted about the middle of the day at Sezanne, where they learnt that Mortier and Marmont had joined forces on the 26th at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre; but that being still weak, they had fallen back as far as Meaux, and that in order to save that suburb of the capital, there was not a moment to lose. The army immediately pushed forward half-way to La Ferté-Gaucher: the Imperial headquarters were at the castle of Estrenay, which the Prussians had pillaged in the morning. Here bad news arrived from Troyes. The Austrians had resumed offensive operations the instant Napoleon's back was turned; and in a sanguinary action at Bar-sur-Aube on the 27th, their generals had shown themselves equally prodigal of their troops and of their own persons. Wittgenstein and Schwartzenberg were wounded. The French generals were obliged to fall back; and the Duke of Tarentum, who had gained some advantages on the side of Mussy l'Evesque, and had even at one time relieved the Austrians in guarding the Congress at Chatillon, was also carried along in the general movement of retreat. The enemy now became aware that the force opposed to them was but a screen; and felt themselves

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

strong enough to detach Hesse-Homberg and Bianchi against the Duke of Castiglione, who was in their rear. Thus the Austrians were advancing again, instead of retreating; Angereau could no longer operate the diversion which had been planned; and Paris was more than ever threatened by Blucher, who was at the gates of Meaux.

Napoleon still hoped, by an activity that was never equalled, to restore his good fortune; and his first step was to dispose of Blucher. On the 1st of March, the French army arrived early at Ferté-Gaucher. Napoleon stopped at the house of the mayor, a very old man, who had grown young again with zeal. The intelligence was encouraging. The Prussians had been stopped the day before by the breaking down of the bridges of Treport and Lagny, by the Duke of Ragusa at the village of Lisy, and by the Duke of Treviso at the ford of Tremi. The two marshals still maintained themselves in front of Meaux: Napoleon expected to arrive in time, and the troops, though harassed by fatigue, but sustained by the ardent desire of victory, still pressed forward by Rebais to La Ferté-sous-Jouarre. Arrived on the heights, they discovered the town at their feet, the windings of the valley, and on the other side of the Marne the Prussian army, which had escaped their pursuit! Blucher had been informed by Tettenborn of Napoleon's approach, and lost no time in placing the Marne between them, and cutting down the bridge. The Emperor ordered the bridge to be reconstructed with all possible expedition, and went the next day to superintend it. The plain between the Marne and the Ourcq was covered with detachments of the Prussian army retreating in disorder on Soissons. The roads were bad, owing to the weather, and their equipages stuck in the mud. The peasants from all parts brought in accounts of their distress and terror. Napoleon sent off messengers to Paris and to Chatillon with the intelligence of the flight of the Prussians, and dispatched orders to the Dukes of Treviso and Belluno to advance northward and form the left of a circle, in which Blucher might be inclosed. The weather had changed on a sudden; and the muddy ways, which had retarded the enemy's march, were converted by a hard frost into solid and easy roads. Still the course of the Aisne opposed a barrier to the passage of the Prussians in the direction they had taken. Soissons, the key of that barrier, was in possession of the French, with a garrison of fourteen hundred Poles. Blucher had no hope of carrying it by a *coup-de-main*. He was at Beurneville, near La Ferté-Milon; his soldiers scattered over the plains of Gandelu and Aulchy-le-Chateau, with the Aisne before and the Marne behind them, pressed on the left by the troops of the Duke of Treviso and the Duke of Ragusa, and on the right by Napoleon's army, ran great risk of being hemmed in at Soissons and forced

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

to lay down their arms at the foot of the old ramparts of that town. This was almost the last instance in which the hope of human liberty breathed thick, and dared to look around for deliverance as possible ! Napoleon, full of his project, debouched on the 3rd of March by the new bridge of La Ferté ; made a rapid movement on the highway from Chalons, as far as Chateau-Thierry ; and at that point turning his army to the left in the direction of Soissons, brought it back on the enemy's flanks. By following the road, the troops marched quicker than the Prussians, got between them and Rheims, and were able to attack them before they could pass the Aisne. Napoleon slept that night at Bezu-St. Germain. While the right of the French army was thus advancing by the route of Chateau-Thierry, the enemy was turned on the left by the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa, who pushed forward to Soissons through Villers-Cotterets and Neuilly-le-St. Front. Thus beset on every side by these masterly combinations, the enemy gave himself up for lost ; but at that critical moment, the drawbridges of Soissons were lowered to receive the astonished Prussians.—‘ There is no more to say.’——

This unexpected passage was opened for them by Generals Bulow and Winzingerode, who had been brought by the merest chance to the other side of the Aisne, and who meeting before Soissons on the 2nd of March, had persuaded the Commandant to capitulate. On the morning of the 4th, Napoleon, still unacquainted with what had happened, continued his movement on the Aisne. The Imperial army passed at the foot of the ruined castle of Fere-en-Tardenois, and arrived at Fismes, so as to cut off the road from Soissons to Rheims. It was here he first learnt the loss of Soissons and the good fortune of the Prussians.——

Here let us pause.

CHAPTER LII

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1814 (CONCLUDED)

ENGLAND had just obtained the signature of the treaty of Chaumont,¹ dated the 1st of March, by which the Allies bound themselves to confine France within her ancient limits. It is supposed there were other secret articles relating to the dethroning of Napoleon, which out of

¹ This mention of England as acting the part of a busy-body on the occasion will be regarded by some as invidious and unpatriotic, and yet we shall hear praises the next moment bestowed on the English minister (Castlereagh) for his energy, perseverance, and wisdom in bringing the negociation to this complexion.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

delicacy towards Austria, and till success was made sure, were kept back for a time.

From that period both the political and military events seemed to hurry down a steep descent to their final catastrophe. In this critical state of things, in which the spirit of the country failed as the pretensions of the Allies became more exorbitant and dictatorial, Napoleon was uneasy at being thrown so far from the scene of the negotiations, but did not like to turn back till he had disabled the Prussians from again annoying him. Above all things, he sought nor was he without expectations of a battle. In the night between the 4th and 5th of March, General Corbineau was sent with a detachment of cavalry to occupy Rheims, which he did the next morning. Napoleon next proposed to surprise the passage of the Aisne by the new bridge at Bery-au-Bac, on the road between Rheims and Laon. The whole of the army proceeded thither on the 5th along the cross-road. The bridge was carried by General Nansouty's cavalry and the enemy driven upon Corbeny. Having secured the passage of the Aisne, he dispatched scouts to the garrisons of the Ardennes and Lorraine (behind Blücher) with orders to put themselves in motion for the purpose of barring his retreat and assisting the operations of the advancing army. On the 6th the French moved forward towards Laon, but halted at Corbeny. The corps of Winzingerode, Woronzoff, and Sacken advanced to meet them to give the Prussians time to rally about Laon. The Russian army took up a position on the heights of Craonne, a long, steep ascent, between the course of the Aisne and the Laon road, where they appeared inaccessible on the flanks, and difficult to attack in front. Obstacles, however, vanished before eagerness to strike the last blow; and the vanguard established itself at Craonne, half-way up the declivity. Ney pushed on his troops as high as the farm of Uturbie, Gourgand and Caraman occupied the defiles of the mountain, and preparations were made for a battle the next day. Napoleon was at the village of Corbeny.

Here he was presently surrounded by the principal inhabitants of the neighbouring places. He recognised in one of them (the mayor of Baureux) M. de Bussy, his old comrade in the regiment of La Fère. This officer had emigrated; and since his return, had lived retired on his patrimonial estate on the banks of the Aisne. He acted as guide the next day. An emissary from Strasburg of the name of Wolff also arrived with accounts of the rising of the inhabitants of the Vosges on the supposed retreat of the Austrians: he stated that the peasants near Bar-sur-Ornain had killed a Russian general and dispersed his regiment; that sallies had been made by the troops at Verdun, at Metz, and at Mayence; and that the garrisons and inhabitants of that part of France were more than ever disposed to co-operate with Napoleon's designs.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

He does not seem to have done more than given a cold and formal assent to theirs. There was, in fact, nothing he so much dreaded as adding to the unavoidable horrors of war. He was chargeable with a little professional pedantry in this. With all his military energy and boldness he wanted some of the revolutionary spirit at this crisis. Levies in mass would have been more to the purpose than armistice and matrimonial alliances. But he was bigotted to a mode of success, and would no more give the people the head than the ideologists and republicans would allow him his full scope to save the country. He still trusted to his genius and his fortune, and would not at the last gasp give a loose to the impulse of popular fury, when nothing else could serve him, because it might also overwhelm him. Old Percy had a juster notion of the extremities of war.

—' Now let not nature's hand
Keep the wide flood confin'd ! Let order die
And let this world no longer be a stage
To feed contention in a lingering act ;
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
Reign in all bosoms, that each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
And darkness be the burier of the dead ! '

When the passions dictate the attack, they must be consulted in the defence ; and I hate all reasoning that boggles about the means and loses the end.

The battle of Craonne commenced on the 7th at day-break. Marshal Ney and Marshal Victor fought at the head of the infantry : Marshal Victor was wounded. General Grouchy commanded the cavalry of the army, and General Nansouty the cavalry of the guard : they were both wounded. General Belliard took the command of the cavalry ; the fire of the artillery was directed by General Drouot, who at length succeeded in driving back that of the enemy. But the difficulty of marching up the ascent was extreme ; the ground was contested foot by foot by the Russians, and there was no means of accelerating their retreat by a movement on their flanks. The only trophies left of the victory of Craonne, which was disputed a considerable part of the day, were the enemy's dead, the best of all trophies ! The Russians made another stand at the Ange-Gardien, an inn where the roads to Soissons and Laon meet, to give the Prussians time to come up. At night the Imperial head-quarters were removed from the field of battle down into the valley of the Aisne, and fixed at the little village of Bray. Napoleon after this sanguinary action, in all the dangers of which he had shared, still agitated by the uncertainty of battle, harassed with fatigue, and surrounded with wounded and dying men, found himself

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in one of those moods in which the glories of war no longer seemed to redeem its horrors and disgusting features, when dispatches from Chatillon were announced, and he was never more disposed to listen to terms of peace. But the Allies had no such matter in their heads: they only wanted to pick a new quarrel with him. They treated the adherence of France to the basis laid down at Frankfort as a breach of the terms of the negotiation which *they* had since offered; insisted on France returning within her old limits, would allow of no discussion; and unless she did this immediately, or gave in a counter-project, would break up the conferences. Napoleon was prepared for great sacrifices; but this tone of defiance was too much. 'If I am to receive a castigation,' he said, 'it is not my business to expose myself to it: the very least I can do is to have it applied by violence.' Rumigny was consequently to take back no counter-project, but to deliver the words which he had just heard. The messenger mounted his horse at daylight to return to Chatillon, and Napoleon went to join the head of his columns.

A detachment was sent to take possession of Soissons; and the army halted two leagues short of Laon, where the road was confined between morasses, of which the enemy took advantage to oppose his progress. Napoleon returned to Chavignon for the night, where it was necessary to think of forcing the passage of the defile the next day. Gourgaud, the first orderly officer, put himself at the head of a night-enterprise intended to favour this object. A cross-road turned on the left of the morass, into which he threw himself with some chosen troops; and under cover of the darkness, surprised the guard of the Allies. This alarm effected a complete diversion, during which Marshal Ney cleared the defile. Thus the French army reached the foot of the heights of Laon, the corps of the Duke of Ragusa arriving by the Rheims road at the same time that the main body came up by that from Soissons. The other troops arrived in succession. The Prince of the Moskwa, the Duke of Ragusa, the Duke of Treviso, and the Imperial Guard occupied different positions. Every preparation was made, and orders were issued for commencing the battle the following morning at day-break. Blucher, who had rallied his Russian and Prussian forces, had also been joined by the vanguard of the Crown-Prince, who advanced but slowly and under the suspicion of the Allies. Thus the Prussian general found himself stronger than ever. He opposed to the French centre the corps of Bulow, to their left the corps of Langeron, Sacken and Winzingerode, to their right the corps of Kleist and Yorck. In the centre of these troops was the town of Laon, standing on an elevated peak, and commanding the environs.

No discouragement was felt in the French ranks, either from the

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

enemy's number or position. Every thing denoted a sanguinary and decisive battle. Napoleon had just put on his boots and called for his horses at four in the morning of the 10th, when two dismounted dragoons were brought before him. They stated that they had just escaped as by a miracle through a *houre* which the enemy had made in the night on the bivouacs of the Duke of Ragusa, and that all was lost in that quarter. The intelligence was soon confirmed; and Marmont, who was at first supposed to be killed, was then in the Rheims road, striving to rally his troops. This event filled up the measure of the disappointments which had of late baffled all Napoleon's efforts; nor was it an accident, but a kind of insult that showed the audacity of the enemy's generals, encouraged by numbers and by various circumstances. They were unable to carry the French position the next day, but were repulsed to the gates of Laon. It was, however, in vain to think of forcing them there, and Napoleon made up his mind to retreat. He left Chavignon on the morning of the 11th, the army following him and taking up a position in the defiles that covered Soissons. He was occupied in fortifying this place, when a new enemy appeared. In the night between the 12th and 13th of March, he learnt that the Russian general St. Priest with fifteen thousand Russians had taken Rheims, after having overthrown General Corbineau and killed or taken him prisoner. Napoleon did not neglect so important a place, which connected Blucher with Schwartzberg's army. He immediately set out and arrived the same evening at the gates of the town. After an obstinate resistance in which the enemy's general was wounded, the Russians withdrew, and Napoleon entered Rheims at one in the morning. General Corbineau presented himself next day among the inhabitants, who crowded before Napoleon's lodgings. The Duke of Ragusa had rallied in time to co-operate in the attack on Rheims. He was called upon to give an account of his conduct; and reproaches were not spared, which are supposed to have rankled in his breast. The same day, the 14th, the Dutch general Janssens, formerly governor of the Cape of Good Hope, arrived with a reinforcement of six thousand men, which he had brought from Mezieres and the garrisons of the Ardennes, by the way of Rhetel. While Ney was advancing to Chalons, the army halted in the neighbourhood of Rheims on the 14th, 15th, and 16th. These three days of rest were necessary to prepare it for new marches, and gave Napoleon time to meditate on his future line of conduct. That military halt was one of the last in which Buonaparte found leisure to sign the official documents and to place the affairs of the empire on their customary footing. Up to that period, whatever might be the hardships of the campaign, he had superintended every thing, and shown himself equal to direct the affairs of the interior, and fight

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

all Europe with a handful of men. Such extraordinary activity must naturally have shocked the *still-life* of thrones, and showed a capacity too vast for France or Europe safely to hold it !

Napoleon in this interval had time to look about him at the state of his affairs. In the north, General Maisons contrived to keep the enemy in check between Tournay, Lille, and Courtray. Carnot remained master of Antwerp. The English general Graham, on the night between the 8th and 9th of March, had surprised one of the gates of Bergen-op-Zoom, and penetrated into the town with four thousand troops ; but they were surprised and defeated in their turn by the presence of mind of General Bizannet, who is said by Buonaparte to have conducted himself like a second Bayard on the occasion. The Duke of Castiglione had lost time by amusing himself in a petty warfare with General Bubna about Geneva, instead of advancing boldly on Vesoul and the rear of the Allies ; and had thus ceased to be of any use in the great events of the campaign. Napoleon had intended to replace Augereau by a more active and enterprising general, and had fixed his thoughts on Marshal Suchet. The army of the Pyrenees and its commander displayed a loyalty, proof against misfortune. Soulé was at length compelled to abandon the line of the Adour by the loss of the battle of Orthez on the 27th of February ; gained that of Tarbes over the Portuguese on the 2nd of March, and retreated in good order on Toulouse, but left the road to Bourdeaux open to the English, who in concert with Lynch, the mayor, hoisted the standard of Louis XVIII. there on the 12th, in proof that the war had never had for its object to meddle with the independence or internal government of France. The Duke d'Angoulême was shortly expected to make his entrance into that city. The progress of the foreign armies by so many different routes naturally gave consistency to the hopes of the house of Bourbon, which had first put all those armies in motion. The Count d'Artois had shown himself in Franche-Comté and Burgundy ; and Joseph Buonaparte had written to his brother to apprise him of the secret intrigues and machinations that were going on in Paris.

Napoleon having determined to make head against the enemy, had no more time to lose. He wished to strike a decisive blow, and he could not accomplish this without risking all for all. The safety of Paris was the first consideration. Schwartzemberg might be there on the 20th, and it was against him that his march must be directed. He, however, stood in need of some signal advantage, which could not be obtained from an attack in front. He therefore came to the daring resolution of throwing himself on the Austrian rear, which manœuvre held out the chance of destroying the enemy's rear-guard, of making important captures, of deranging the whole plan of the hostile move-

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

ments, and placing the Allied Sovereigns in a most perilous situation in the heart of France. At worst, he could always retire upon the garrisons of Lorraine. It was supposed from various rumours that Schwartzberg had arrived at Nogent. To debouch behind him, the army was to proceed upon Epernay, Fere-Champenoise, and Méry. The corps of the Prince of the Moskwa, which it had been under consideration to employ as partisans in Lorraine, were appointed to rendezvous near the same spot. But this movement would uncover Paris, and Blucher had already pushed on detachments to Compeigne. Napoleon, above all things, was desirous to secure the safety of his wife and son ; and gave instructions to Prince Joseph, to have them removed on the slightest appearance of danger to the Loire. These orders were soon after carried into effect on the morning of the 29th of March, when the Empress and the King of Rome quitted the Thuilleries—it might be too much to say never to return to them. The young prince resisted, shed tears, and said he would not leave the palace ; and it required force to convey him to the carriage. The heir of the greatest name in the modern world, of him who had so long kept foreigners from France, made way for those who had been justly expelled from her soil for incapacity and malice, and who were brought back by those foreigners against her will. England willed it, France allowed it ; but England will one day rue that sentence, and France cancel her own ignominy by reversing it !

The necessary dispositions having been made, the army set out on the morning of the 17th. The corps of the Duke of Ragusa was alone left at Rheims, with strict orders to co-operate with the Duke of Treviso in defending the road to the capital foot by foot against the hordes of Russians, Swedes, and Prussians, that were about to break in upon it, in their rage for the independence of nations and sworn attachment to the preservation of the geographical boundaries of different countries ! Napoleon (who was not himself so nice, but was at the bottom of all their good behaviour and high-flown pretensions, by keeping them from traversing the same route long before) arrived at Epernay at an early hour, where he first heard of the events at Bourdeaux. The hospitable inhabitants of Epernay brought out their best Champaign wines, to drown for a while the cares of the soldiers and the generals. The next day, they continued their march to Fere-Champenoise. In the evening, Rumigny arrived from Chatillon. The Allies had given Caulaincourt three days to subscribe to the proposed conditions. The time was short, but the circuit which they made the couriers take was long : so that the truce would expire before the answer could be given, and Lord Castlereagh could not but smile at so well-managed a result ! On the 19th, the army passed the river Aube at Plancy ; and towards

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

evening, the advanced-guard, passing over the ashes of the town of Méry, gained the hamlet of Chatres, on the high road from Troyes to Paris. Some baggage and prisoners were brought in, and fresh information was obtained. Napoleon had been misled by the alarms of the capital. The enemy had suspended their march on Paris during the five days that they remained uncertain as to the events of Laon and Rheims. The check given to St. Priest and Napoleon's stay at the latter place had increased the indecision of the enemy's generals, who at first halted; and on hearing that he was at Epernay, ordered a general retreat. Platoff with his Cossacks had hastily withdrawn from Sezanne to Arcis, and the head-quarters of the Allies had fallen back as far as Troyes. There was even a question to continue their retreat to Bar. The troops that the French had fallen in with at Chatres were some of the last rear-guard, who were carrying off the boats of the bridge that had been thrown over the Nogent. It was during this momentary panic that the Emperor Alexander caused a communication to be made to Schwartzberg at four in the morning to dispatch a courier to Chatillon with orders for the signing of the treaty of peace, demanded by Caulaincourt. The anxiety which Alexander felt on that occasion was such, that he himself said, 'It would turn half his hair grey!'

Thus the Austrians having retrograded at the mere shadow of his name, Napoleon had stopped too short for his intended plan in turning from Fere-Champenoise to Plancy. He was still between the Allies and Paris, instead of being behind them. He must proceed further eastward to execute his first design. On the 20th of March the whole of the army was in motion to reascend the Aube, and arrived at an early hour on the heights of Arcis. Some of the enemy's troops having been observed on the Troyes road, detachments were sent to reconnoitre: they were vigorously resisted, the advanced-guard engaged, and at length the rest of the troops were drawn into action. Napoleon thought he had fallen in with some scattered corps; but it was the whole of Schwartzberg's army, advancing to join Blucher's on the plain of Chalons, and thus, according to a late resolution of the Allies, to overwhelm Buonaparte by superior numbers (ten to one, they thought themselves secure) and avoid continual harassing retreats before his diminished forces. He was aware of all the precaution with which he inspired his enemies. While endeavouring to manœuvre on their flanks, he fell in with their vanguard in the lateral movement they were making to unite their forces before they again ventured to attack him. In this action, Napoleon was personally exposed to the greatest danger. Far from shunning the perils of the battle, he seemed to court them. He fought at the head of his escort, and was several times obliged to extri-

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

cate himself from desperate cavalry-charges, sword in hand. A shell fell at his feet ; he awaited the explosion ; and was soon enveloped in a cloud of smoke and dust. He was thought to have been killed, but he got upon his legs again, threw himself on another horse, and went to expose himself once more to the fire of the batteries, where Death refused him as a victim !

While the enemy's forces were forming a semicircle round Arcis, the French army rallied under the walls of the houses of the suburbs. The fall of night protected them in that position, though they could not long maintain it. The balls crossed each other in every direction over the little town of Arcis ; the castle belonging to M. de la Briffe (the Imperial head-quarters) was pierced on every side. The suburbs too were on fire, and there was but a single bridge over the Aube. Napoleon took advantage of the night to throw a second bridge across, and the movement of retreat commenced the following morning. The action was renewed along the whole line and lasted part of the day. The French kept the enemy back, when he ought to have annihilated them ; and repassed the Aube in an orderly manner. The Dukes of Tarentum and Reggio were the last who crossed.¹ Unable any longer to oppose the enemy's masses, he did not chuse to dispute the road to Paris with them. He still thought of operating a grand diversion. He abandoned the road to the capital, and retreated by the cross-roads to Vitry and Lorraine. In this he did wrong ; but he appeared to get out of the way to leave treason to do its worst in the capital, in proportion as he felt assured that it would do so, and from his reluctance to admit any apprehensions on the subject even in his own breast. He knew that the fidelity of the Parisians was a desperate chance, and he mechanically looked another way, while the cast was thrown. Alas ! it was time enough to hear of unpalliated baseness, after it had happened ; and then there would be an excuse to say, that it was too late to prevent what was inevitable in itself ! The new scheme of tactics adopted by the Emperor threatened the communications of the Allies, and might, it is true, kindle a fatal conflagration in their rear. But this was not the moment for contingencies and probabilities. It was necessary to make assurance doubly sure—to preclude the possibility of the Allies taking Paris, or (which was the same thing) getting there before him. He might rely on the insincerity of the leaders, and their desire to show off their new mountebank tricks before the Allies. Buonaparte ought not to have let the enemy out of his

¹ Napoleon, before he left the town, sent two thousand francs to the Sisters of Charity, to enable them to relieve the wants of the wounded and suffering. This was the man who was held up as a monster of ferocity and cruelty, as a foil to the enviable *douceurs* of Legitimacy !

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

sight for an instant. His retiring to a distance to draw them after him was a *wild-goose chase*. When a man is going to apply a lighted match to a mine of gunpowder, it will not do to beckon him off or to make a feint to alarm him; the only way is to put it out of his power to execute the mischief he intends. There was in Buonaparte's conduct in this precipitate movement too much speculative refinement, and too little attention to the *main-chance*. But I suspect he was influenced (as I said before) by a secret consciousness of the utter heartlessness and hollowness of those on whom he had to depend; and sought an excuse for throwing the blame on Fortune, rather than letting it remain a spot on honour, on liberty and human nature.

The ball of victory (which Napoleon had so far endeavoured to roll up its arduous ascent with assiduous pains and dauntless perseverance, and which he had so often suspended on the edge of a precipice by his own sole strength and skill) being now left to itself, rolled downhill fast enough with thundering sound to the gates of the capital. Napoleon was at the village of Somepius on the night between the 21st and 22nd. The next day he crossed the Marne; and after sending a detachment to summon Vitry-le-Français, stopped at Plessis-ô-le-Comte. On the 23rd the army reached St. Dizier, at which town the Duke of Vicenza rejoined the headquarters. This circumstance served as a pretext for some half-stifled murmurs to break out among the higher officers. It was asked, 'Which way are we going? What is to become of us? If he fall, we shall fall with him!' Thus it should seem as if attachments founded on choice and reason might always be retracted at the convenience or pleasure of one of the parties, and only those that were involuntary and founded on compulsion, ignorance, or prejudice were general principles of action binding in all circumstances. These were, however, exceptions, painful as they were: for the soldiers and officers in general remained firm to their own honour, and to their country's independence. Buonaparte dispatched the Duke of Reggio on the side of Lorraine, and General Piné towards Langres and Chaumont in the rear of the Allies; proceeded to Doulevant on the 24th and 25th, whence he might advance on Lorraine, on Burgundy, or on Paris by the left bank of the Seine, according to the intelligence he should receive; he was recalled to St. Dizier on the 26th by an attack from Blücher; and on the 27th rallied under the walls of Vitry. These different movements very much resemble the suggestions of despair, or the extreme workings of habitual energy, having no longer either means or object. He redoubled his precautions, waited to collect more precise information, refined upon and extended the scale of his combinations, clinging to the shadows and accompaniments of power after the

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

substance had vanished ; when all he had to do was to throw himself on the hunters, and rend them in pieces or perish in the attempt. But perhaps he could not make up his mind to yield himself conquered or submit to receive the *coup de grace* from so base a foe. Had he rushed forward to meet the impending blow ; had he, like the dying gladiator, extended his hands towards the enemy after his sword was wrested from him, as if his very will had a power to kill,¹ loud acclamations might have followed such an example of heroic self-devotion ; and a kindred fury have poured out the blood of those myriads, who were insatiable of human gore, and whose appetite for feeding on human flesh could only be diverted by delivering up to them the violated corse of liberty which they came to seek ! But other counsels prevailed, perhaps dictated by a loftier sense of power, and which subsequent events did not altogether fail to justify.

At Vitry Napoleon learnt the real posture of affairs. While Schwartzberg was forcing the passage of the Aube at Arcis, Blucher had arrived by the Rheims road on the banks of the Marne, having driven back the corps of Marmont and Mortier towards Chateau-Thierry. The junction of the two armies was effected on the 23rd. The Allies had to decide whether they should march against Napoleon or advance upon Paris. They hesitated, fearing an insurrection in the country behind them, which is the military side of France ; when some secret emissaries from Paris determined them to proceed. Relying upon treason as their best auxiliary, they chose the boldest step ; and on the 23rd of March a proclamation, announcing to France the rupture of the negotiations at Chatillon and the junction of the two great armies, avowed the resolution of the Allies to advance in mass upon Paris. It was expected that the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa would oppose the march of the Allies up to the very faubourgs ; instead of which they attempted to rejoin Napoleon, and met with a severe repulse at Fere-Champenoise. On hearing these tidings Napoleon mounted his horse, left Vitry, and repaired to St. Dizier with all his troops. He passed the night in his cabinet, intent on his maps. If the Allies had made good use of their advantages in this decisive advance, the French still had it in their power to make as resolute a use of theirs. They were masters of their movements ; nothing (it was observed) prevented them any longer from rallying the garrisons, from stopping up the roads, cutting down the bridges, and inflicting a signal chastisement on the mixed hypocrisy and audacity with which that band of foreigners had at last penetrated into the heart of the country. Let the capital submit to its fate, but be it the grave of the enemy ! That extremity was constantly contemplated from the beginning of the campaign.

¹ The action of Mr. Kean in the conclusion of Richard III.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Napoleon had made every effort to familiarise his mind to suitable determinations; his plans were formed, and he had only to follow them up. But in the moment of action, his resolution failed him; he was deterred by what his enemies might say of him; and a Rostopchin was wanted to finish what a Napoleon had begun ¹

Paris might hold out for several days; but would the Parisians defend it? That question ought hardly to have been left to their decision. The road by the left bank of the Seine still lay open to Napoleon. However far advanced the enemy might be, he hoped to arrive in time to rally his forces under the cannon of Montmartre, and discuss the last conditions of peace in person. The army began its march by the route of Troyes and Doulevant. When the head-quarters were about to quit St. Dizier, eight or ten persons were brought in, taken by the peasants; among others M. de Weissemburg, the Austrian Ambassador to England, a Swedish general, and others. M. Vitrolles, an agent of the Bourbons, sent by M. Talleyrand to the Emperor Alexander, was among them, but escaped. The only advantage which the Emperor wished to take of their misfortune was to make M. de Weissemburg the bearer of a direct communication to his father-in-law. But it so happened that at this very period the Emperor of Austria had been separated from the Allies, had been forced to fly with a single gentleman and a single servant in a German *droska* and took refuge in Dijon, where he remained actually a prisoner for thirty hours. Napoleon still seemed inclined to attach some consequence to this application, had it been conveyed in time. But that sovereign in being false to 'kindred' was true to 'kind'; and the greater obligation swallows up the less. Let kings stand by one another; only let the people stand by one another too! I am very willing to compound the matter so. In the afternoon of the 28th the army was at Doulevant; Napoleon was met there by an emissary of M. de Lavalette. For ten days no intelligence had been received from Paris: the eagerness with which the decyphering the small piece of paper entrusted to that man's care was waited for, may be easily imagined. The following were its contents:—'The partisans of the foreigners, encouraged by what has occurred at Bourdeaux, no longer conceal themselves; they are supported by secret machinations. The presence of Napoleon is necessary, if he wishes to prevent this capital from being delivered up to the enemy. Not a moment is to be lost.'

¹ It would have been a subject of regret if the Louvre had been destroyed in defending Paris; and so perhaps of other things. Thus, when a country has any thing in it to make it worth saving, it can no longer be saved by destroying every thing in it. Other objects then interfere with the independence of our country, so that it is only in barbarous states that patriotism is a pure flame, a natural instinct.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

The army had already commenced its march, and arrived at Troyes on the evening of the 29th. The Imperial Guard marched fifteen leagues that day by Doulevant and Doulencourt. At the bridge of Doulencourt, Napoleon was encountered by a number of couriers and expresses who had been detained at Nogent and Montereau. The enemy's troops had followed Schwartzberg's movement on the Marne, and the route by Troyes was left open. Napoleon instantly ordered General Dejean, his aide-de-camp, to set off at full speed, and announce his return to the Parisians. After a few hours' rest, he set forward again on the morning of the 30th. He thought proper to make a military march as far as Villeneuve-sur-Vannes; when no longer doubtful about the security of the road, he threw himself into a post-chaise. Intelligence was successively received in changing horses, that the Empress and her son had left Paris, that the enemy was at the gates, and that the attack had commenced. He never showed more impatience at the length of the way, encouraged the postilions himself, and advanced with extraordinary speed. About ten o'clock at night, he was but five leagues from Paris: fresh horses were putting to at Fromenteau near the fountains of Juvisy, when he learnt that he had arrived a few hours too late. Paris had just surrendered, and all was over.

Some troops from the capital had already reached that village. General Belliard was with them, and Napoleon was soon made acquainted with the events which had hastened that frightful catastrophe. The Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa after the unfortunate action at Fere-Champenoise had thought only of falling back on Paris; but they had scarcely reached Ferté-Gaucher when they were attacked by a Prussian corps through which they had to cut their way. On the morning of the 28th the enemy pursued them to Meaux; and the Regency, on hearing this intelligence, thought proper to leave Paris. At length, the Allies descried the walls of the capital on the evening of the 29th. No news had come from the armies for eight days. The absence of Napoleon had extinguished the hope of succour. The departure of the Empress with the Ministers filled up the measure of discouragement and distraction. On the appearance of the enemy, the rich proposed capitulating; the working classes, who called for arms, could not be supplied with them. The brave soldiers of the Dukes of Treviso and Ragusa were determined to make a last effort. A few thousand men belonging to the *dépôts* of Paris, the pupils of the Polytechnic school, and from eight to ten thousand Parisians, who volunteered from the National Guard, marched out to take part in the defence of the capital. The whole of the force did not amount to twenty-eight thousand bayonets; yet it did not despair of making head against the enemy.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

The battle began at five in the morning of the 30th. Prince Schwartzberg commenced operations by an attack on the wood of Romainville. The action was sustained with great obstinacy and with equal success during the whole of the morning. Had Napoleon arrived at this juncture, there is no saying what might have happened. Why then was he absent? But towards noon, the plan of the Allies became more clearly developed. Blucher had marched by the right through the plain of St. Denis against Montmartre, and the Duke of Wurtemberg by the left on Charonne and Vincennes. Prince Joseph, seeing the immense body of troops collected at the foot of Montmartre, was convinced of the necessity of capitulating; and having given the requisite powers to the Duke of Ragusa, proceeded to join the government on the banks of the Loire.

During the conferences the enemy had spread themselves on all the neighbouring heights of Père La Chaise, Chaumont, and Menilmontant; Montmartre was carried, and Blucher was about to force the barrier of St. Denis, when a suspension of hostilities was agreed to. It was five o'clock in the evening; the terms of the capitulation were settled, but nothing was yet signed. Such were the communications made to Napoleon; and he dispatched the Duke of Vicenza to Paris to see if it was still possible for him to interpose in the treaty. During that interval of anxious suspense, he was separated only by the river from the enemy's out-posts. The Allies had forced the bridge of Charenton and spread themselves over the plain of Villeneuve St. Georges; and the light of their bivouacs was reflected on the rising grounds of the right bank; while the corner of the left bank, where Napoleon was waiting with a few attendants, lay in the most profound obscurity. At four o'clock a courier brought word from the Duke of Vicenza that all was over; that the capitulation had been signed a little after midnight, and that the Allies were to enter Paris that same morning. Napoleon immediately ordered his carriage to turn back, and alighted at Fontainebleau. 'It is here that we must take a view of human affairs: let us reflect upon so many wars undertaken, so much blood shed, so many people destroyed, so many great actions, so many triumphs, such political combinations, such constancy, such courage: what has been the issue of it all?'¹ Only to prove how much the genius of one man can do; how sure it is that kings will prevail against the people; and that the pride of the one is incompatible with the freedom of the other!

On the 31st of March, at six in the morning, Napoleon entered Fontainebleau. He repaired to his little apartment at the castle, situated on the first story, in a line with the gallery of Francis I. In the course

¹ Montesquieu, as quoted by Baron Fain.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

of that evening and the following morning, the heads of the columns which he had brought from Champagne came up by the road of Sens ; and the advanced-guard of the troops from Paris arrived by the road of Essonne. These wrecks of the Grand Army now assembled round Fontainebleau. The different marshals arrived successively at the Imperial head-quarters. The troops as they came up were posted behind the river Essonne, at Mennecy, or round Fontainebleau. The park of artillery was ordered on to Orleans. Napoleon therefore still had an army : but while he was considering what advantage he could make of his position, the thoughts of the individuals about him were wholly turned to what was passing at Paris—ever the slaves of opinion and worshippers of success ! The Duke of Vicenza had met with a favourable reception from Alexander ; who held in his hands the keys of Paris which had just been presented to him, but could give no answer till the troops were in secure possession of the city. Meanwhile, the chiefs of the hostile armies had begun to declare themselves against the government of Napoleon. Schwartzenberg in particular, in the absence of his sovereign, was the most eager to manifest his sentiments, probably because a diversity of opinion might be naturally expected to arise in that quarter ; and was the first to avow (after the various mock-lines of pacification, the Rhine, the old limits of France, &c. that had been progressively insisted on as the campaign advanced and drew to its ultimate close) that the Allies would make no peace with Napoleon ;¹ and to recommend it to France to restore the Bourbons as the only way of coming to an amicable understanding with the rest of Europe, the governments of which (with one exception, at least) were not founded on a revolutionary basis. Why had not this been stated not only from the beginning of the campaign, but during the whole war, as the only ground and object of Coalition after Coalition ? Would they have had fewer accomplices to second them, fewer dupes to applaud them ? It would have been a singular piece of self-denial in the sovereigns to renounce the favourite object of twenty years' solicitude and prayers to the deaf Heavens, the moment that it was providentially placed within their reach, for the sake of a few blushes or faltering excuses in letting it appear in what the secret of all their love of independence and freedom consisted. The old Republicans were mad to expect it ! The Buonapartists were traitors ever to think it !

This proposition was communicated on the 31st by Schwartzenberg as his own and M. Metternich's opinion to the Duke Dalberg, the same

¹ The year following they went farther and proposed to assassinate him. There were two names in particular to the state-paper of the Congress of Vienna, those of M. Talleyrand and the Duke of Wellington, to which one does not see what epithet sufficiently expressive can be affixed !

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

person whose name is connected with the affair of the Duke d'Enghien. At this signal the agents of the house of Bourbon, availing themselves of the general stupor that prevailed, no longer feared to show themselves. The same day at noon, the Emperor Alexander and the King of Prussia made their entrance into the capital. This event at first excited no sensation ; but at length cries in favour of the Bourbons were heard, and white cockades were mounted. The astonished Parisians inquired why the Emperor of Austria did not appear : they might easily have guessed the reason. The Emperor Alexander alighted at the house of M. de Talleyrand. This Minister had been instructed to follow the Empress to the Loire ; but he halted at the barrier, and returned to Paris to pay his respects to the Allies. Why was not the reptile crushed, as he glided back on his insidious errand ! No sooner had the Czar established himself in Paris than he held a council to deliberate on the best course for the Allies to adopt, which was doubtless the one they had already resolved upon. M. de Talleyrand and his confidential friends attended this council to give the proper answers for justifying the conduct of the Allies. The Emperor Alexander for form's sake observed that there were three courses open ; to treat with Napoleon, demanding guarantees ; to appoint a regency ; or to recall the Bourbons. M. de Talleyrand then suggested the last as the only one conformable to the general wish of the people. The Emperor having modestly hinted a doubt of this general wish, of which the Allies in their march through France had met with no convincing proofs but just the contrary, M. de Talleyrand and the Abbé de Pradt answered with equal assurance both for themselves and all France ; and the Emperor Alexander, satisfied with this reply, said, ' Well then, I declare I will not again treat with the Emperor Napoleon.' Permission was obtained to make this declaration public : and in two hours afterwards it was posted on all the walls of Paris. Thus nations are disposed of, while they themselves look on and wonder. The Autocrat of all the Russias made it known in this conference that he did not wage war upon France but on Napoleon and those who were hostile to French liberty. Before he talked of granting liberty as a compliment to France, he had better have gone back and set his own subjects free. The kind of liberty he meant was soon translated into plainer language. M. de Nesselrode had already written to the Prefect of Police, directing him to liberate all persons imprisoned for attachment to *their legitimate sovereign*. Did England subscribe the same shibboleth too—she that a hundred years before had discarded her own legitimate sovereign to place an Elector of Hanover on the throne, whose descendants still occupied it ? Thus the centuries stammer and contradict each other. In vain did the Duke of Vicenza endeavour to obtain the promised audience. 'The cause of his sovereign,' says

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

Napoleon, 'was lost even before he could procure a hearing.' It was lost with the first battle he lost. From the moment he was found not to be invincible, impassive to the blows of fate, proof against the machinations of Gods and men, a hope, a thirst of vengeance grew up in the place of the fear and amazement he had before inspired; and nothing from that time forward could shelter him from the persecution of deep-lodged hatred but a prison or a tomb. The Abbé de Pradt observes with great *naïveté* in relation to the summary evidence on which the Allies acceded to the restoration of the Bourbons as a new thought which would never have entered their minds till now that it was forced upon them by the spontaneous wish of the French people—'At the close of the council we exerted our utmost endeavours to obviate the effect of the representations which Napoleon's negociators might bring forward.' [As to the general wish expressed in behalf of the whole French people by the Abbé de Pradt and the Prince of Benevento.] 'If we could not prevent their arrival, we at least succeeded in shortening their stay in the capital and mitigating the effect it was calculated to produce.' There are refinements in meanness, in treachery, and impudence, to which no words can do justice; or new names should be invented, the old ones having lost their force.

There were not three but four courses open. 1. To treat with Napoleon. This the Allies had all along pretended was their only object, but this they now flatly refused. 2. To appoint a Regency. This they did not object to as altogether inadmissible, but set it on one side as inexpedient. 3. To recall the Bourbons. This the French might do if they chose, and the Allies, though not insisting on, would approve of it. 4. If they did not do it of themselves, they would force them to do it, as in fact they did the year following, when the only answer to the demand of a hearing that could be obtained from an insolent livery-groom and whipper-in of despotism was—'Your king is at hand!' But really after all the blood that had been shed to keep out these Bourbons, their own among the rest; after the foreign wars and coalitions to restore them instigated by these Bourbons and that had been broken up year after year; after the assassinations, massacres, and civil convulsions that had been caused by the dread and hatred of them and their pretensions to rule over France in contempt of the choice and wishes of the people; after the French themselves had become a by-word and had been shut out of the pale of civilised Europe because they had refused to submit to the principle that mankind are the absolute property of a few hereditary princes; after they had triumphed over all Europe in this just and noble quarrel, which was not only theirs but mankind's, since, in doing so, they had struck down and quelled that loathsome phantom that reared its form over states and nations, claim-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

ing the world as its toy, braving the will and sacrificing the lives of millions to the least of its caprices, blotting out the light of Heaven and oppressing the very air with a weight that is not to be borne; after a government had been established on the ruins of the former arbitrary one, and that carried the glory, the prosperity, and the security of the country to the highest pitch under the rule of one, 'who was to them Hyperion to a Satyr'; and when the only drawback to that felicity was the enmity to France which this family and the shaking off their galling yoke had entailed upon her, and which at length, persevering in its objects and aided by the unrelenting nature of power and the sleepless malice of fortune, reversed all their successes, heaped defeat on defeat, and laid them at the mercy of their enemies;—then to have these Bourbons brought forward again and held up by foreign bayonets to lord it over their misery and insult their fall, and this not as arising from any old grudge to the cause of freedom or secret league and fellowship among kings, but as the general wish and long-suppressed vow of the French themselves, this was the most extraordinary proposition that ever affronted the human understanding, as the French were the most extraordinary people to submit to it as they did, and become its converts on the spot as a happy augury and a gracious boon! The Allies themselves were ashamed of the barefaced disclosure of all their designs and dereliction of all their mighty professions of freedom and independence; and to break the fall, invented a number of little winding-galleries in diplomacy, leading gradually from the top of regal hypocrisy to the lowest degradation of the subject. Why say that the Bourbons were the choice of the French people when they claimed to reign over them in spite and in contempt of their choice? But the French are, it is said, a vain people, and they did not like the idea of being conquered: it was therefore understood that they were *restored*! They did not quite stomach six hundred thousand bayonets pointed at their breasts: and therefore this hostile demonstration was to be called *deliverance*. The French are a people who set almost as much store by words as by things, and who very much prefer the agreeable to the disagreeable: they therefore took the word of the Allies that nothing was meant but to oblige, and so the affair ended, without any thing tragical, as a sentimental drama!—The emissaries of the Bourbons ran about everywhere among the baggage and artillery of the Allies, addressing every one; and all who listened to them were regarded as favouring their designs. They might have been told, 'Take away these harsh disputants with brazen throats, and then we'll answer you.' If the opinion of the French army was considered as neutralising the popular voice, surely the roar of foreign cannon did not echo it. It was a hackneyed complaint that brute force

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

had given the law to Europe. Had not an appeal been made to brute force against reason and opinion? Alas! not in vain! As the French however are fond of restoration and deliverance, they must be accounted doubly happy, since they were restored and delivered again precisely in the same manner and on the same principles a year after; and to make the charitable donation still more palatable to them, an English general (who was well-suited to such a task) was the chief performer in administering it to them! But to pass on from this subject which perhaps has taken deeper hold of my mind than it deserves; for either liberty itself is the most worthless cause or the French the least worthy of it of any people on the face of the earth.

It was necessary to find an organ of public opinion; nor was it difficult to find one in the *Senate*. This word will be henceforth shameful in history. They met on the 1st of April under the presidency of M. Talleyrand, and appointed as members of the Provisional Government Messieurs Talleyrand, Beurnonville, Jaucourt, Dalberg, and the Abbé Montesquieu—these gentlemen having taken due care to nominate themselves! The Council of the Department of the Seine at the same time declared for the Bourbons. Such was the substance of the accounts received at Fontainebleau during the first three days. They produced a great impression on the chiefs of the army (some of whom were already in treaty with the enemy) but they did not make Napoleon relinquish his military projects. He still found himself at the head of fifty thousand men; and he resolved to march on Paris. He hoped that the firing of his cannon would rouse the Parisians and revive the national spirit. For some hours the enemy had been lulled into the security of success; the generals were feasting in the hotels, the troops scattered about in the labyrinths of the city. A *coup-de-main* on Paris might produce some great result and was well worth attempting. The army had already begun to move, when in the night of the 2nd of April the Duke of Vicenza arrived and presented himself before the Emperor. He had been flattered by the Allies into some hope of a Regency, and came to solicit his abdication in favour of his son. Napoleon wisely suspecting an ambush held back, and refused to explain himself. In the morning of the 3rd he mounted his horse to inspect the advanced posts, and the whole of the day was spent in military preparations.

The troops were in good spirits and listened with acclamations of joy to the scheme of delivering the capital. The young generals, inspired with the same ardour, were ready to brave new dangers and fatigues. But it was not thus with those in the highest ranks. They were alarmed at what they termed a headlong adventure; and wished, as they could no longer trample over Europe, at least to keep the peace at home. Hints of the proposed abdication got abroad; and were whispered in

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the palace and even on the stair-case of the *Cheval-Blanc*. It was immediately caught at as the easiest way of letting the question down.

In the night of the 3rd an express arrived from the Duke of Ragusa to say that the Senate had proclaimed the Abdication. On the 4th orders were issued for transferring the head-quarters to a position between Ponthierry and Essonne. After the parade which took place every day at noon in the court of the *Cheval-Blanc*, some of the principal officers escorted Napoleon back to his apartment. The close of this audience was expected to be the signal for mounting horse and quitting Fontainebleau. But a conference had been entered into on the situation of affairs; it was prolonged till the afternoon; and when it broke up, Napoleon's abdication was made known. The want of spirit evinced by his old companions in arms was what made him yield. But this act of abdication which he wrote with his own hand¹ was only conditional, in favour of his son. It was in these words —

‘The Allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor Napoleon was the only obstacle to peace in Europe, the Emperor, faithful to his oath, declares that he is ready to resign the throne, to quit France, and even to sacrifice his life for the welfare of the country, which is inseparable from the rights of his son, those of the regency of the Empress, and the maintenance of the laws of the Empire.

‘Given at our palace of Fontainebleau,
‘April 4, 1814.

‘NAPOLEON.’

This act was transcribed by a secretary; and the Duke of Vicenza prepared immediately to convey it to Paris, accompanied by the Prince of the Moskwa. Napoleon also wished the Duke of Ragusa to be joined with them, as being his oldest companion in arms; but Marshal Macdonald was substituted in his stead, at the suggestion of some one present, as having more influence with the army, and having been less about Napoleon's person. After the departure of the plenipotentiaries the Emperor dispatched a messenger to the Empress at Blois to inform her of what had just taken place, and to authorise her to send the Duke of Cadore to her father, who was still in Burgundy, to solicit his intercession for her and her son. This was, I think, stooping from his ‘eyry.’ Overpowered by the events of the day, Napoleon had shut himself up in his chamber, where he was now about to receive the severest blow that had yet been aimed at his heart. On the night of the 4th Colonel Gourgaud, who had been dispatched with orders to Essonne, returned with the utmost speed to announce that Marmont

¹ The round marble slab on which he wrote it is still shown at Fontainebleau.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

had forsaken his post and repaired to Paris; that he was treating with the enemy; that his troops having received secret orders to march, were at that moment passing the Russian cantonments, and that Fontainebleau remained undefended. Napoleon could not at first credit this distressing news; but when he could no longer doubt its truth, his eye became fixed, and he threw himself into a chair, overcome by his feelings. 'Ungrateful man!' he exclaimed: 'but he will be more unhappy than I!' He immediately addressed the following order of the day to the army.

'Fontainebleau, April 5, 1814.

'The Emperor thanks the army for the attachment it has evinced to him; and principally because it acknowledges that France is with him and not with the people of the capital. It is the soldier's duty to follow the fortune and misfortune of his general, his honour and religion. The Duke of Ragusa has not sought to inspire this sentiment in the hearts of his troops. He has gone over to the Allies. The Emperor cannot approve of the condition on which he has taken this step: he cannot accept of life and liberty at the mercy of a subject. The Senate has presumed to dispose of the French Government; but it forgets that it owes to the Emperor the power which it now abuses. The Emperor saved one half of the members of the Senate from the storms of the Revolution: and the other half he drew from obscurity and protected against the hatred of the people. These men avail themselves of the articles of the Constitution as grounds for its subversion. The Senate blushes not to reproach the Emperor, unmindful that as the first body of the state, it has participated in every public measure. It goes so far as to accuse the Emperor of altering acts in their publication.

'A sign was a command to the Senate, which was always ready to do more than it was required to do¹. The Emperor has ever been accessible to the remonstrances of his ministers; and he therefore expected from them the most complete justification of the measures he adopted. If public speeches and addresses received the colouring of enthusiasm, then the Emperor was deceived: but those who held this language must thank themselves for the consequences of their flattery.

'The Senators have spoken of libels published against foreign govern-

¹ 'The Emperor above all things complained of the servile disposition of the Senate. This was a great cause of dissatisfaction to him throughout the whole of his life. But in this respect he was like most men, he wished for contradictory things. His general policy was not in unison with his particular passions. He wished to have a free Senate that might secure respect to his government; but at the same time he wished for a Senate that would be always ready to do whatever he wanted.'—Note from Montesquieu's *Grandeur des Princes*, appended to the text by Napoleon.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

ments, forgetting that those libels were prepared in their own assembly. So long as fortune continued faithful to their Sovereign, these men also remained faithful to him. If the Emperor despised mankind as he is said to have done, the world will now admit that it was not without reason. His dignity was conferred on him by God and the people, who alone can deprive him of it : he always considered it as a burthen ; and when he accepted it, it was with the conviction that he was enabled adequately to sustain it. The happiness of France seemed to be connected with the fate of the Emperor : now that fortune frowns on him, the will of the nation can alone induce him to retain possession of the throne. If he is to be considered as the only obstacle to peace, he voluntarily makes the last sacrifice to France. He has in consequence sent the Prince of the Moskwa and the Dukes of Vicenza and Tarentum to Paris, to open the negotiation. The army may be assured that the honour of the Emperor will never be incompatible with the happiness of France.'

Napoleon's plenipotentiaries soon perceived how much their cause had suffered during the absence of the Duke of Vicenza. The members of the Provisional Government incessantly importuned the Allied Sovereigns to bring about the exclusion of the Empress and her son. So true is it, that treachery only finds relief in the excess of its baseness. Besides, their dread of the father afforded them no hope of security but by the fall of the whole family. The plenipotentiaries found them at their post, in attendance on the Allied Princes ; and observed, not without apprehension, the air of satisfaction that was impressed on their countenances. This is certainly (considering who these persons were) one of the most odious pictures ever afforded of human nature ! The Duke of Ragusa soon after entered with a confident air : this circumstance explained every thing. They learnt from the Emperor Alexander, that the Duke of Ragusa's troops had been led to Versailles by General Sarazin,¹ and that by the desertion of the camp at Essonne, the person of Napoleon was in the power of the Allies. While he was at the head of fifty thousand picked troops, military calculations had prevailed over intrigue ; but now that the army itself seemed to abandon the cause of Napoleon, all considerations of delicacy were laid aside. The abdication in favour of the Empress and her son was not enough ; and the plenipotentiaries were informed, that Napoleon and his dynasty must entirely renounce the throne. The Duke of Vicenza returned to Fontainebleau on this painful mission.

¹ On the preceding evening at Fontainebleau, this same French general had received two thousand crowns from Napoleon. If what he saw around him was the *acme* and height of civilisation, Alexander must have gone back to his barbarism and his deserts, with no little secret satisfaction.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

On seeing the Duke, Napoleon's first thought was to break off a negociation, which had become so humiliating. Being now pushed to the last extremity, he endeavoured to free himself from the trammels in which he had been imperceptibly involved. War could be no worse than peace : this, he thought, must be clear to every one ; and he hoped the chiefs had discarded their chimerical notions. Perhaps, all might yet be saved. Soult had fifty thousand men : Suchet fifteen ; Prince Eugene had thirty thousand ; and fifteen thousand were with Augereau in the Cevennes, besides those with General Maisons and the garrisons, which might be collected together and make one last noble stand. But at the very report of a rupture of the negociation, alarm once more spread through the head-quarters ; and all were resolved to oppose the only step that still gave a glimpse of hope or of retrieving their affairs. They were ready enough to triumph and vapour over all the rest of the world, and this they thought quite in character for the Great Nation ; but they scorned by painful and doubtful struggles to save their country from the last outrage and the last disgrace. They were shocked at the idea of incurring the odium of contending at once against fortune and opinion, which in France were the same thing. The example of the Russians and Spaniards, who made such desperate sacrifices in support of *their* independence, seemed to confirm them the more in their own dastardliness and effeminacy as a polite return to it. Buonaparte had said of them, that ' Frenchmen had no sentiment but that of honour ! ' and they are so full of this and of themselves, that they have no room left for the sense of *dishonour*. ' On their brow Shame is ashamed to sit : ' and instead of persisting in a losing cause, or sitting down sullen and discontented under misfortunes and defeat, which is the lot of others, they thought it better to go over to once the enemy, to join his triumph (as they had none of their own to celebrate) and to march into the saloons of the Allied Princes with smiling and erect looks, and all the blushing honours of treachery and ingratitude on their heads, braving contempt and silencing reproach by a perfection of baseness that made the bye-standers ashamed of their species, and that tarnished the name of truth or virtue.

Buonaparte attributes the backwardness of his generals to their fear of losing their fortunes. But though the French are mercenary as well as light and vain, the want of fortitude is their besetting and constitutional vice ; and it was the fear of incurring ridicule, of not succeeding in a hazardous enterprise, or of not coming out of it with their accustomed *éclat*, that deterred them. The younger generals would have joined him from greater generosity and enthusiasm, or because a romantic adventure would bring their names into notice, of which, with the termination of the war, there was no hope. The former were, however,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

incorrigible. The new revolution was represented as being 'a great contract between all the interests of France, in which it was only necessary to sacrifice one interest, namely, that of Napoleon'—as if that which was the only stumbling-block to the Allies, was not the only safeguard to France. Napoleon was held out as the only blot on the amiableness and inoffensiveness of the French character; that is, he was the only person in France whom the invaders feared or cared the least about, because he was the only person who could or did interpose between them and their old claims and designs. The only question among the generals now was how to find prettexts for going to Paris; and this was easy to men who seemed to be restrained by no ties of honour or gratitude, neither by the shame of late defeats nor the pride of old victories, which appeared to be quite forgotten. While the utmost anxiety prevailed at Fontainebleau to know what was doing at Paris, the Allies were not less eager to know what was passing near Napoleon, on whom they kept a vigilant eye. Every precaution was adopted against one of those bold movements by which he had so often astonished Europe and broken through the toils prepared for him. A Russian army was posted between Essonne and Paris; another on the right bank of the Seine; other corps had marched on the roads to Chartres and Orleans; others again were dispersed between the Yonne and the Loire. The line of blockade round Fontainebleau daily became closer; and was thought a convincing argument by those who, having lost the spirit, could see no means left for resistance.

Napoleon appreciated more justly the unequal strength of the net which was drawn round him, and promised to break through it. 'A road,' he said, 'that is closed against couriers will soon open before fifty thousand men.' Yet he hesitated and was restrained by a secret dissatisfaction, foreseeing but too well the difference which would subsist between his past and future fortunes. He who had always commanded great armies, who in every battle had been accustomed to decide the fate of a capital or a kingdom, must henceforth assume the character of a partisan-leader, an adventurer roaming from province to province, skirmishing and destroying with doubtful success. An appeal was also made to his dread of civil war, which was always a weak side in his character. 'Well, then,' he cried, 'since I must renounce the prospect of defending France, does not Italy afford a retreat worthy of us? Will you follow me across the Alps?' A profound silence ensued. If at this moment Napoleon had quitted the saloon and entered the hall of the inferior officers, he would have found a host of young men eager to follow wheresoever he might lead. But a step farther, and he would have been greeted at the foot of the staircase by the acclamations of all his troops! But he was swayed by the habits of

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

his reign : he could not leave the Emperor behind ; nor move without the great officers whom he had created ; nor conquer (as it seemed to him) without his old train of lieutenants. Past recollections haunted him ; and there rose up before him perhaps a shadow of the future, vast, undefined, gorgeous, that would have dimmed all former glories and blotted out all former disgraces, and that was all but realised ! Every one breathes the atmosphere around him, and he at length yielded to the apathy of his followers, though not without addressing them in these prophetic words :—‘ You wish for repose ; take it then ! Alas ! you know not how many troubles and dangers await you on your beds of down. A few years of that peace which you are about to purchase so dearly, will cut off more of you than the most sanguinary war would have done ! ’ The Emperor owned himself subdued less by the fear of his enemies than the defection of his friends ; and taking his pen, he drew up and signed the second formula of his abdication :—

‘ The Allied Powers having proclaimed that the Emperor is the only obstacle to the re-establishment of the peace of Europe, the Emperor, faithful to his oath, renounces for himself and his heirs the thrones of France and Italy, and declares that there is no sacrifice, not even that of life, which he is not ready to make for the interests of France.’

The Allies, who hardly expected that Napoleon would make so absolute a surrender, eagerly caught at it, and hostilities were instantly suspended.¹ Napoleon was to retain the rank, title, and honours belonging to crowned heads. He was to have an independent residence assigned to him ; and Corfu, Corsica, and the Isle of Elba were proposed, the last of which was determined upon. With regard to pecuniary matters, a desire was expressed to treat Napoleon and his family with the greatest generosity. An establishment in Italy was assigned to the Empress Maria-Louisa and her son ; nor were any of the members of the Imperial family, including Josephine and Eugene Beauharnais, left unprovided for. The more flattering these promises were, the more they seemed to gratify the vanity or duplicity of the Allies. The Emperor Alexander carried his generosity so far as to take into consideration Napoleon’s military suite and domestic establishment. It was his proposal that Napoleon should (as if he had been on his death-bed) dictate a will to remunerate them. Any thing that bore a resemblance to that would no doubt be acceptable to him. To the disgrace of European diplomacy, these liberal proffers were never carried into effect.

¹ The notice of the suspension of hostilities did not reach the Duke of Wellington till the 12th of April, who, after a sanguinary battle and great loss of men, was besieging Soult in Toulouse.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

While the treaty which was to ratify these arrangements was pending, Napoleon sent courier after courier to demand back the paper from the Duke of Vicenza which was the foundation of it. He had been dissatisfied with himself ever since he had signed the surrender of his throne. The diplomatic proceedings displeased him still more. He thought them both useless and degrading. After surviving his greatness, he wished thenceforth to live as a private individual. All he asked was not to be accounted a prisoner of war; and for that a mere cartel was sufficient. The treaty was signed at Paris on the 11th of April, and the Duke of Vicenza carried it immediately to Fontainebleau. The first words Napoleon uttered were a demand to have the act of abdication returned. But it was no longer in the Duke of Vicenza's power to give it up. The paper was the first document presented to the Allies as the basis of the treaty and of the re-establishment of the new order of things in France. The Bourbons were naturally as much dissatisfied with this as a preliminary step to their ascending the throne as Napoleon was with the act by which he had resigned it. There was, however, no remedy: Fontainebleau was now a prison, every road leading to it being carefully guarded by foreign troops. To sign the treaty appeared the only way to preserve his liberty, perhaps even his life; for the emissaries of the Provisional Government¹ were lying in wait for him in the neighbourhood. Napoleon still persisted in his refusal: but how was he to escape from the alternative in which he was placed? For some days he had been apparently dull and indisposed, and he was only roused from his abstraction by contemplating the gloomy pictures of history. The subject of his private conversation was the voluntary death to which the heroes of antiquity had doomed themselves in situations similar to his own. The apprehensions excited by this turn of thought were increased by his manifesting no desire to see the Empress, who was expected at Fontainebleau, but rather a wish to avoid the interview.

On the night of the 12th, the silence which reigned in the long corridors of the palace was suddenly interrupted by the sound of hurried footsteps. The servants of the palace were heard running to and fro; a number of persons arrived; and sobs and groans resounded from the inner chamber. The secret of this night has always been involved in extreme obscurity; but the following story has been circulated. During the retreat from Moscow, Napoleon had, in case of accident, taken measures to prevent his falling alive into the hands of the enemy. He procured from his surgeon Yvan a bag of opium, which he wore about his neck as long as danger was to be apprehended. He after-

¹ Why did he not hang up these miscreants at their own doors, as he was advised to do, when they first began to play their tricks a few months before?

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

wards carefully deposited this bag in a secret drawer of his cabinet. On the night of the 12th, he thought the moment come for availing himself of this last expedient. The *valet de chambre* who slept in the adjoining room, the door of which was ajar, heard Napoleon empty something into a glass of water, which he drank, and then returned into bed. Pain soon extorted from him an acknowledgment of what had just taken place. He then sent for the most confidential persons in his service. Yvan was also sent for; who finding what had happened, and hearing Napoleon complain that the poison was not quick enough in its effect, lost all self-possession, rushed out of the chamber, and fled from Fontainebleau. It is added that Napoleon fell into a sound sleep; and that after copious perspiration every alarming symptom disappeared: either the dose was insufficient in quantity, or time had mitigated the power of the poison. The Emperor, astonished at the failure of his attempt, exclaimed, 'God then has ordained that I shall live;' and resigned himself to his fate. The whole affair was hushed in secrecy; and on the morning of the 13th Napoleon rose and dressed himself as usual; and his objection to ratify the treaty being now at an end, he signed it without further hesitation.

The individuals about Napoleon now learnt from his own mouth, that he had ceased to reign. He enjoined them to submit to the new government as henceforth the rallying point of the French people. Fontainebleau was soon nearly deserted, as Orleans and Blois had been by the Empress's court. The few who still remained at Fontainebleau were engaged in making preparations for their departure for the Island of Elba. Napoleon put the library under contribution, and shut himself up with his books and maps, in order to collect every particular relating to his future place of residence. The Grand-Marshal Bertrand,¹ General Drouot, General Cambrone, the treasurer Peyrusse, the state-messengers Deschamps and Baillon obtained permission to follow the Emperor. A small domestic establishment was composed for the Island of Elba. Only four hundred of the Guard were permitted to go; and almost all Napoleon's old companions begged to be selected: the choice therefore was most embarrassing. The lines of the English poet have been quoted here, and I will not do myself the violence to exclude what is so noble in itself and so worthy of the occasion:—

—' He that can endure
To follow with allegiance a fallen lord,
Does conquer him that did his master conquer,
And earns a place i' the story.'

It had been determined that each great power should send a com-

¹ Poor Duroc! how he would have felt this blow!

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

missioner to Elba by way of safeguard to Napoleon, whom they were to accompany to the place of his destination. Eight days had elapsed before they arrived at Fontainebleau. In the meantime the Imperial Family was dispersed in various directions. The Empress and her son had fallen into the power of the Austrians, and were conveyed from Blois to Rambouillet. Napoleon's mother and Cardinal Fesch set out for Rome; the brothers—Louis, Joseph, and Jerome Buonaparte were proceeding to Switzerland. The command of the army was resigned to the Prince of Neufchatel, who acted under the Provisional Government. Napoleon was now become a private individual. He had withdrawn to a corner of the palace, and only now and then quitted his apartment to walk in the little garden between the old gallery *des cerfs* and the chapel. Whenever he heard the rolling of carriage-wheels in the court-yard, he never failed to inquire whether it was not some of his old ministers who had arrived to bid him farewell. He fully expected Molé, Fontanes, and some others; but no one appeared. Napoleon saw none but the few faithful servants who resolved to remain with him to the last. The Duke of Vicenza was, with his usual activity, engaged in making preparations for the journey. The Duke of Bassano never for a moment quitted Napoleon; and the latter, in his confidential intercourse with his minister, maintained all the serenity of manner and countenance which distinguished him during the brightest days of his glory. From the manners of his minister, it would never have been suspected that those days were gone by. Incomparable and affecting testimony of fidelity! At one of those moments when Napoleon was anxiously looking for the arrival of some of his old friends, Colonel Montholon presented himself. He had just come from the Upper Loire, whither he had been sent to make a recognisance. After describing the sentiments by which the people and the troops were animated, he spoke of rallying the forces of the south. Napoleon smiled at the zeal of this faithful servant. 'It is too late,' he replied; 'such an attempt would expose France to the horrors of a civil war, and no consideration can urge me to risk that.'

These last proofs of attachment seemed to console Napoleon for the wounds which ingratitude had aimed at his heart. He regularly perused the Paris journals, from which torrents of abuse were showered upon him. This made no great impression on him; and when malice was carried to a pitch of absurdity, it only drew from him a smile of pity. He happened to find in one of the newspapers an article signed Lacreteille:—'There are two of that name,' said he; 'which of them wrote this? Surely not my Lacreteille?' These insults, added to the many instances of individual ingratitude, had their share in influencing his resignation.

CAMPAIGN OF 1814

Of all the intelligence which he received from Paris, that which caused him least vexation was the arrival of the Count d'Artois, because it put an end to the provisional Government. This was but natural. Napoleon had at no time the proper theoretical hatred of the Bourbons; though he was the only resource of those who had, and the only person who could roll away that great stone from the mouth of the cave of Liberty!

Maria-Louisa had had an interview with her father at Rambouillet. The first thing she did was to place her son in his arms. At this proof of maternal solicitude an expression is said to have passed over the Emperor's face, which indicated a pang of momentary remorse. He told his daughter that she must be separated from her husband for a time, but that measures would be taken for her rejoining him. The Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia both paid the Empress a visit; and were anxious to see the little King of Rome, whose father they had just dethroned in virtue of so many protestations to the contrary. The Emperor of Russia was gay and debonnaire enough; but the King of Prussia looked more askance at the child, thinking, perhaps, that as filial vengeance was the order of the day in Prussia, they had left their work imperfect. Alexander extended his ambiguous courtesy so far as to pay a visit to the Empress Josephine also, and her daughter, Queen Hortense. Buonaparte was very little pleased with these extreme attentions. Maria-Louisa was to set out for Vienna as soon as the Emperor quitted Fontainebleau; she was to carry her son with her, and to be attended by the Duchess of Montebello, the Countesses of Montesquieu and Brignolet, General Caffarelli, and Barons de Bausset and Menneval.

The Commissioners of the Allied Powers had arrived at Fontainebleau;¹ and the departure was fixed for the 20th of April. On the night of the 19th Napoleon experienced another desertion; his confidential valet Constant and the Mameluke Rostan disappeared. On the 20th, at noon, the travelling carriages drew up in the court of the *Cheval-Blanc*, at the foot of the *Fer-à-Cheval* steps. The Imperial Guard formed itself in lines. At one o'clock Napoleon quitted his apartment. He beheld, ranged along the avenues through which he passed, all that now remained of the most numerous and brilliant court in Europe. These individuals were the Duke of Bassano, General Belliard, Colonel Anatole Montesquieu, the Count of Turenne, General Foulcr, Baron Megrigny, Colonel Gourgaud, Baron Fain, Lieutenant-Colonel Athalin, Baron de La Place, Baron Lelorgne d'Ideville, Chevalier Jouanne, General Kosakowski, and

¹ These Commissioners were General Schouvaloff for Russia, General Kohler for Austria, Colonel Campbell for England, and General Truchsees for Prussia.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Colonel Vonsowitch : these two last were Poles. (The Duke of Vicenza and General Flahaut were absent on missions.) Napoleon shook hands with them all ; then hastily descending the steps, he passed the range of carriages, and advanced towards the Imperial Guard.

Having signified that he wished to speak, all were hushed in a moment, and listened in profound silence to his last words :—‘ Soldiers of the Old Guard,’ said he, ‘ I bid you farewell. During twenty years you have been my constant companions in the path of honour and glory. In our late disasters as well as in the days of our prosperity, you invariably proved yourselves models of courage and fidelity. With such men as you, our cause could not have been lost ; but a protracted civil war would have ensued, and the miseries of France would thereby have been augmented. I have therefore sacrificed all our interests to those of the country. I depart : you, my friends, will continue to serve France, whose happiness has ever been the only object of my thoughts, and still will be the sole object of my wishes ! Do not deplore my fate : if I consent to live, it is that I may still contribute to your glory. I will record the great achievements we have performed together. Farewell, my comrades ! I should wish to press you all to my bosom : let me, at least, embrace your standard !’ At these words General Petit took the eagle and came forward. Napoleon received the General in his arms and kissed the flag. The silent admiration which this affecting scene inspired, was interrupted only by the occasional sobs of the soldiers. Napoleon made an effort to subdue the emotion which powerfully agitated him, and then added in a firm voice, ‘ Farewell once more, my old comrades ! Let this last kiss be impressed on all your hearts !’ Then rushing from amidst the group which surrounded him, he hastily stepped into his carriage, where General Bertrand had already taken his seat. The carriages instantly drove off. They took the road to Lyons, and were escorted by French troops.¹

¹ A few days before Napoleon set out for Elba, his old Prefect of the Palace, De Bausset, was sent to him from the Empress, and has left an interesting account of their interview.

‘ I was introduced ’ (he says) ‘ immediately to the Emperor, to whom I presented the letter of the Empress. “ Good Louisa ! ” he exclaimed, after having read it. He then asked me a number of questions concerning her health and that of his son. I begged him to honour me by being the bearer of an answer, a consolation which the heart of the Empress greatly needed. “ Stay here to-day,” he said : “ in the evening I will give you my letter to take back.”’

‘ I found Napoleon calm, tranquil, and decided. His mind was strongly tempered. Never, as I think, did he appear grander to me. I spoke to him of the Isle of Elba : he already knew that this small sovereignty would be accorded to him. He made me notice on his table a book of Geography which contained all the details of which he

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

CHAPTER LIII

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA AND RETURN FROM IT

THROUGHOUT all the first part of Napoleon's journey, he was the object of universal respect and of the warmest and most affectionate interest. This fell off as he drew nearer to its close. On the evening of the 20th he reached Briarre, and on the following days arrived

wished to be informed on the subject of his future residence. "The air there is healthy," he observed, "and the disposition of the inhabitants excellent. I shall feel tolerably comfortable there, and I hope that Maria-Louisa will do so too." He was not unacquainted with the obstacles that had been raised to their meeting at Fontainebleau; but he flattered himself that, once in possession of the Duchy of Parma, the Empress would be allowed to come with her son and settle with him in the island of Elba. He was mistaken; and was never more to see these objects of his most tender affection.

The Prince of Neufchatel who had just given in his adhesion to the new government entered the Emperor's cabinet to ask permission to go to Paris on particular business, and promised to return the next day. "He will not come back," said Napoleon coldly to the Duke of Bassano. "What! Sire, is it possible that this should be the last farewell of Berthier?" replied that loyal and faithful minister. "Yes, I tell you, he will not come back!" Towards two in the afternoon, the Emperor went to walk on the terrace at the back of the gallery of Francis I. He sent for me to put a number of questions as to the events of which I had probably been a witness. "He was far from approving the step which had been taken in making the Empress quit Paris." I mentioned the letter which he had written to his brother Joseph. "The circumstances were no longer the same," he said: "the mere presence of the Empress at Paris would have been sufficient to prevent the treason and defection of some of my troops. I should still be at the head of a formidable army, with which I might have forced the enemy to quit Paris and sign an honourable peace." I thought I might venture to state that it was to be regretted that he had not concluded peace at Chatillon. He answered, "I never believed in the good faith of our enemies: every day there were new demands, new conditions. They did not want peace; and then I had declared to France that I never would accede to any terms that I thought humiliating, even though the enemy were on the heights of Montmartre." I went so far as to remark that France, circumscribed as she would have been, would, nevertheless, have continued to be one of the finest kingdoms in the world. "I abdicate and give up nothing." Such was his reply which he uttered with a remarkable composure.¹

¹ 'On the 14th of February, 1813, at the opening of the session of the Legislative Body, Napoleon announcing his desire of peace, added:—"It is necessary to the world: four times since the rupture which followed the treaty of Amiens I have offered it by a solemn procedure: I will not make any but an honourable peace, and one suitable to the grandeur of my empire."'

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

successively at Nevers, Rouanne, Lyons, Montelimart, and Orgon : on the 26th he slept near Luc, on the 27th at Frejus ; and on the 28th, at eight in the evening, he embarked on board the English frigate, *The Undaunted*, commanded by Captain Usher. It was deemed prudent to arrange matters so that Napoleon should reach Lyons in the night : or rather it was intended to prevent his reaching that city at all. An English gentleman residing there and the Austrian commissioner went out in disguise and mingled with the crowd, curious to hear the imprecations of which they expected he would be the object. But as soon as the Emperor appeared, deep silence prevailed among the multitude ; and an old woman, rather above the common class, dressed in deep mourning, and with a countenance full of enthusiasm, rushed forward to the carriage-door. 'Sire,' she said, 'may the blessing of Heaven attend you ! Endeavour to make yourself happy. They tear you from us : but our hearts are with you wherever you go.' The Austrian general, not a little disappointed, said to his companion, 'Let us be gone ; I have no patience with this old mad woman. The people have not common sense.' A little beyond Lyons, the General-in-Chief of the Army of the East appeared on the road ; and Napoleon, alighting from his carriage, walked with him a

'During this audience, which lasted above two hours, he made me acquainted with his opinion of some of his lieutenants, and expressed himself with energy of one of them in particular. "Macdonald is a brave and loyal warrior. It was only in the late conjuncture that I was enabled to appreciate all the nobleness of his character : his connection with Moreau had given me a prejudice against him : but I did him an injury, and I much regret not having known him better." Then passing to other subjects, "See," said he, "what a thing is destiny ! At the battle of Arcis-sur-Aube, I did all I could to meet a glorious death in defending, foot by foot, the soil of the country. I exposed myself without reserve. It rained bullets around me ; my clothes were pierced, and yet not one of them could reach me," he added with a sigh—"A death which I should owe to an act of despair would be a baseness. Suicide neither accords with my principles nor with the rank which I have filled on the stage of the world.¹ I am a man condemned to live," he observed, still sighing. We then took several turns round the terrace, keeping a profound and mournful silence. "Between ourselves," resumed the Emperor with a smile full of bitterness, "they say that a living drummer-boy is worth more than a dead Emperor." The air with which he pronounced these few words made me think that the interpretation of this old adage might be given thus : *It is only the dead who never return.*

'Before we parted I spoke to him of the different persons I had met on the road in coming from Paris. The last name I pronounced was that of General Hullin, who had been president of the court-martial on the trial of the Duke d'Enghien. "Oh ! as for him," he said, "he must always arrive too late to make his peace with the Bourbons." As he uttered these words, which I repeat faithfully and without commentary, he returned to his apartments. I have never seen him since.'—*Memoirs of the Interior of the Palace*, vol. 2. p. 247.

¹ See above, p. 209.

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

considerable way. When Augereau had taken his leave, one of the Allied Commissioners ventured to express his surprise, that the Emperor should have treated him with such an appearance of friendship and cordiality. 'Why should I not?' inquired Napoleon. 'Your Majesty is perhaps not aware that he entered into an understanding with us several weeks ago?'—'It was even so,' said the Emperor, in speaking afterwards on the subject; 'he whom I had intrusted with the defence of France on this point, sacrificed and betrayed the country.' Napoleon was less favourably received as he approached Provence, where there had always been a party of malcontents, and where the plots of his enemies anticipated his arrival. He was once or twice exposed to insult and personal risk, which gave rise to the most exaggerated and ridiculous stories, that have at present only one discreditable echo! Napoleon is represented as having wept and trembled like a woman. It is easy to distinguish the style of the hero from that of his historian: nor is it difficult to understand how a pen, accustomed to describe and to create the highest interest in pure fiction without any foundation at all, should be able to receive and gloss over whatever it pleases as true, with the aid of idle rumour, vulgar prejudice, and servile malice. The author here alluded to with no less shame than regret writes fiction with the broad open palm of humanity—history with cloven hoofs!

Having reached Aix, precautions were taken to ensure his personal safety. At a chateau on the road called Bouelledon, he had an interview with his sister Pauline. On his arrival at the place of embarkation, there were two vessels waiting to receive him, an English and a French. Napoleon chose the English one in preference, observing he would never have it said that a Frenchman had carried him away. Only the Austrian and English commissioner accompanied him on board. During the passage he conversed with great frankness and ease with Captain Usher and Sir Neil Campbell. He laughed at the supposition of the caricatures which his voyage might occasion. The sailors, who at first imagined they had got a wild beast on board or some non-descript animal, were soon delighted with his gaiety and good-humour; and he became a favourite with them. One of them, more obstinate than the rest, would not listen to the praises of his shipmates, and said it was all a deception. This was truly English, to maintain that the prejudice you have conceived or the report you have heard against any thing is the reality, and the thing itself an imposture. On taking leave, Napoleon presented these jolly tars with a purse of two hundred Napoleons; and the boatswain, in returning thanks in the name of the crew, wished him 'his health and better luck the next time.' On the 4th of May they arrived at Porto-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Ferrajo, the principal town in the island. Buonaparte first landed incognito; and having returned on board to breakfast, he went on shore in form about two o'clock, receiving a royal salute as he left the *Undaunted*. On the beach, he was received by the governor and other official persons, who conducted him to the Hotel-de-Ville, preceded by a band of wretched musicians. The people welcomed him with shouts, anticipating many advantages from the residence of their new Sovereign among them.

Elba is close to the coast of Tuscany, and about sixty miles in circumference. The air is healthy, except in the neighbourhood of the salt-marshes. It produces little grain, but exports a considerable quantity of wines; and its iron ore has been famous since the days of Virgil. Buonaparte lost no time in exploring the surface of his little state. He did not fail to visit the iron mines, which he was informed produced about five hundred thousand francs a year. But it seems he had given away this revenue to the Legion of Honour. One or two of the poorer class of inhabitants knelt and even prostrated themselves when they met him. He expressed disgust, and imputed this unusual degree of debasement to their wretched education under the monks. It was only the common and universal state of debasement a century or two ago, from which he was one of the main engines for rescuing the world. Climbing a mountain above Ferrajo, and seeing the ocean approach its feet on almost every side, the expression broke from him, 'It must be confessed that my isle is very little.' He however appeared to be perfectly resigned to his fate; often spoke of himself as a man politically defunct, and claimed credit for what he said upon public affairs, as having no further interest in them. This alternation of extreme repose and activity in his character appears the most remarkable feature in it; or perhaps the one was the consequence of the other. He must have been worn out with his constant and violent exertions both of mind and body, but for an original happiness of constitution and indolent composure as the groundwork of such prodigious undertakings. Sleep and wakefulness naturally counter-balance each other. He might be said to resign the empire of the world with the same indifference that a man sits down under the loss of a game of chance; or it was his thorough knowledge of the game, and the infinite variety of combinations still passing through his mind, that served him as resources against chagrin and lassitude. In general, the greatest reverses of fortune are the most easily borne from a sort of dignity belonging to them. Where from the nature and extent of the consequences involved in them they become the subjects of history, the individual himself takes an abstracted and *ideal* interest in them; and the vastness of the loss and elevation of the height

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

from which he has fallen, carrying others along with him, lessen the sting of what is personally annoying and would be intolerable in itself.

In the course of two or three days, Napoleon had visited every spot in his little domain, mines, woods, salt-marshes, harbours, fortifications, and whatever else was worthy of an instant's consideration; and had meditated improvements and innovations respecting each. One of his first and not least characteristic proposals was to extend his Lilliputian dominions by taking possession of an uninhabited island, called Rianosa, which had been left desolate on account of the frequent descents of the Corsairs. He sent thirty of his Guards there, sketched out a plan of fortifications, and remarked with complacency, 'Europe will say that I have already made a conquest.' In a short time he had planned several roads; had contrived means to convey water from the mountains to Porto-Ferraio; designed two palaces, one for the country, the other in the city: a separate mansion for his sister Pauline; stables for a hundred and fifty horses; a Lazarretto; receptacles for the tunny-fishery, and salt-works on a new construction at Porto Longone. He placed his court also on an ambitious and regular footing, though the furniture and accommodations of the Imperial Palace were exceedingly mean. His household was reduced to thirty-five persons. He displayed a national flag having a red bend-dexter in a white field, the bend bearing three bees. His body-guard, consisting of about seven hundred infantry and eighty cavalry, occupied a great deal of his attention. They were constantly exercised; and, in a short time, he became anxious about obtaining recruits for them. During the summer of 1814 there was a considerable degree of fermentation in Italy, to which the neighbourhood of Elba, the residence of several of the Buonaparte family, and the sovereignty of Murat occasioned a general resort of Napoleon's friends and admirers. This excited the attention of the English, who are curious to know the meaning of whatever is going on; or not knowing it, suspect mischief. Towards the middle of summer Napoleon was visited by his mother and his sister the Princess Pauline. At the same time he expected to be rejoined by his wife, Maria-Louisa, who was coming to take possession of her Italian states; and who had been promised permission to proceed to Elba, though it was now denied her. Surely, the more dignified step would have been not to have considered her as degraded by so doing, from a mere change of fortunes, unless it were intended to stigmatise the union altogether as forced and unnatural, which could not reflect much honour on any of the parties concerned in it.

In the latter end of May Baron Kohler, the Austrian commissioner, took leave of Napoleon to return to Vienna. After his departure,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Colonel Sir Niel Campbell was the only one of the four commissioners who continued to reside at Elba, by order of the British Cabinet. It was difficult to say what his situation really was; or what were his instructions. It was not the less appropriate in an English commissioner for being impertinent; and the officiousness added to the *bonhomie*. It came the nearest of any thing to the character of a spy. This was not very pleasant to Buonaparte, who might have his reasons for being private; and though he at first took pleasure in Colonel Campbell's society, the intimacy cooled by degrees; and the Emperor by availing himself of the forms of court-etiquette, made it necessary for him to take a trip to Leghorn or the coast of Italy, whenever his curiosity grew uneasy, by which method, at his departure and return, he obtained an audience. Sir Niel found Buonaparte's conversation on these occasions rather vague and declamatory; and seemed to think it hard that the latter did not in good-fellowship communicate all his plans to him, that he might forthwith transmit them to the British Cabinet, the conscience-keeper of Europe. During his residence at the Island of Elba, Buonaparte had also frequent conversations with English travellers (among others Lord Ebrington and Mr. Lyttelton) who, inquiring into the truth of certain allegations brought against him with that jealousy of right and wrong which is natural to them, and which their government turn to so vile a use, were the first means to dispel those shameful delusions which had been employed as bugbears to inflame and madden the public mind, prostituting the moral sense of the community to ruin and enslave both it and the world!

As the winter approached, a change was discernible in the Emperor's habits and manners. The alterations which he had planned no longer gave him the same interest: he rode out but little, and grew more thoughtful and retired. He became also uneasy at being subjected to pecuniary embarrassments. The ready money he had brought from France was soon gone; and to make up the deficiency, he was forced to call for contributions from the islanders who were too poor to pay them. This plan not succeeding and only producing petitions and vexations, he was compelled to have recourse to others, peculiarly galling to his disposition. His actual income did not exceed three hundred thousand francs, and his expenditure amounted at least to a million: he was therefore obliged to lower the allowances of most of his retinue; to reduce the wages of the miners by one-fourth; to raise money by the sale of the provisions laid up for the garrison; and even by selling a train of brass-artillery to the Duke of Tuscany. He disposed also of some property in a barrack, and meant to have sold the town-house at Porto-Ferrajo. These difficulties were mostly

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

owing to the mean and unfair proceeding of the French government, of a piece with all the rest. The sixth article of the treaty of Fontainebleau provided an annuity of two millions five hundred thousand francs to be registered on the Great Book of France, and paid without abatement or deduction to Napoleon Buonaparte. Nevertheless, so far from this pension being paid regularly, there is no evidence that Buonaparte ever received a single remittance on account of it. Sir Niel Campbell so early as the 31st of October expressed his opinion that if this state of things continued much longer, nothing could or would hinder Buonaparte from passing over with his troops to Piombino or some other part of Italy. Lord Castlereagh, in consequence, insisted on the payment of the pension by the French Government, to which no attention was paid—or else, perhaps hinted the propriety of his removal to a place of greater safety, (such as St. Lucie or St. Helena) a proposal which was more likely to sink into the ears of the Allied Sovereigns.

This is not the less probable as the Duke of Wellington had casually seen the latter place, and pronounced that it was good for such a purpose; and as these two distinguished persons lent one another their countenance and wit, such a suggestion might naturally pass from them to the Congress. It is certain that Napoleon soon after heard of such a scheme as in agitation, and that it hastened his decision. Much has been said, though nothing is known, of suspicious movements observed at this period—of the arrival of Dominico Ettori, a monk, and one Theologos, a Greek (a name of ominous import), of furloughs granted to the Old Guard to seduce the French soldiery from their loyalty to the Bourbons; of masked balls given by the Princess Pauline; of plots and conspiracies formed by the Duchess of St. Leu, and the Duchesses of Bassano and Montebello at Paris, and of Fouché jumping out of a window and alighting in the midst of them, to prepare the way for and explain the success of Buonaparte's enterprise, by those who think that slavery is the natural state of repose to which the human mind tends, and that all resistance to it must be brought about by dark and clandestine intrigues. Politicians of this school cannot conceive how a nation like France, with a restored despotism like a toad or ugly nightmare on its breast stifling and sucking up the breath of independence, should be obliged to the person who wakes it from its hateful trance, when a touch is only necessary for this purpose. Buonaparte thought otherwise. He set foot on her shores; and she was free from one end to the other. It was an appeal irresistible and instinctive to all who had not forgotten that they were Frenchmen and men, in whom every spark of honour, of self-respect, of liberty, of recollection of the past or of hope for the future was not dead.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

The return from Elba, to which we must now come, was a blow in the face of tyranny and hypocrisy, the noblest that ever was struck. Even those who had been contented to breathe, to have a feeling or thought only at the mercy of the Bourbons and their Allies, seemed to recover from their stupor. The Congress was dissolved by it ; and no longer bartered the independence of states, and affected to dispose of human nature with an air of easy indifference. There was a pause among the Gods of the earth, a panic among their creatures, a shout from the free ; and France once more with swelling heart and baring her breast to the insolent foe, ‘ heaved pantingly forth ’ the name of her champion and her deliverer.

Buonaparte thus straitened in his circumstances by the breach of one part of the treaty, still more alarmed by the threat held out of the breach of another part by seizing on his person and making him a close prisoner ; apprised also by the public papers of the state of feeling in France, formed his determination accordingly. This state of public feeling and affairs may be thus briefly summed up :—a king professing to reign by the grace of God and the Prince-Regent of England, declaring himself absolute by right of birth, but willing to humour the French people by treating them as manumitted slaves ; and while groaning under a foreign yoke and a revived despotism, mocking them with the offer of Liberty and a Charter—the nobles returned with their old prejudices and pretensions enhanced, and everywhere regarding the people as of a lower species—the Emigrants put over the heads of those who had been fighting against and repelling them from the soil of the country for twenty years, and equally objects of dislike from their insolence and incapacity—the clergy renewing their mummeries, their exactions, and their threats of excommunication against those who held the national domains or church-lands—the great proprietors brought back to the kingdom, but ejected from their former lordships and estates, and eight or ten millions of purchasers of these forfeited estates holding them in jeopardy and with a feeling of irritation and distrust—the army disbanded or recruited with Chouans and Royalists, the fortresses given up, France dismantled, dishonoured, with her arms reversed—the King unable to grant favours or rewards to his old followers and adherents, for fear of offending the Marshals and new nobility, whose only titles to distinction were treason and rebellion in his eyes—the finances again exhausted, public works discontinued, actresses refused burial, thus throwing a stain of impiety on the most refined and admirable of the national amusements, and the observance of the Sabbath strictly enforced, to the destroying the recreations and pastimes of the common people—in fact, the persons, feelings, and customs most hateful to the French, brought back to them by a foreign

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

force, and not by any change in themselves, or voluntary recurrence to old habits and principles ; and thus rendering the whole composition of public and private life a medley of contradiction and absurdity, a conflict between hostile parties in a kingdom (not a settled union or even gradual subsiding of different factions) and making it manifest that a state of things so odious and discordant could be maintained by foreign interference alone, which had at first imposed and still upheld it. All that was wanted, therefore, was a national force to oppose that foreign force and to throw off that grievous burden. But it might be objected that if the French did not submit quietly to their present rulers, all Europe would rise up in arms against them. To so imperious a mandate, there could be but one answer, a practical one ; and there was but one man who could give it. He did not shrink from the appointed task ; and he acquitted himself nobly of it. The plea that the French, in siding with Buonaparte, would prefer war and despotism to peace and liberty is a singular one. The Allies said, ‘ Take the Bourbons and the liberty they give you, abating (to oblige us) some of their original claims and their right to punish you as malefactors : go back to your chains a little lightened *in conformity to the fantastic spirit of the times*, or we will force you to do so. We have conquered you, and we make you over to those in whose cause we fought, to a government you hate and have rejected ; and between whom and you there can never be a true reconciliation. You are a race of dastards, and we will make you a herd of slaves ! ’ So much for the liberty side of the question. For the peaceable plea, it amounted to this : ‘ Louis is a most peaceable monarch, as far as the enemies of France are concerned, but most warlike against his own country : therefore keep him ; or this peaceful monarch will return at the head of six hundred thousand foreign troops to compel you to accept of peace on his conditions.’ This was doubtless a reason for getting rid of him the instant there was even a chance of success. The attempt was worth making ; and it was made with more than a chance of success.

Napoleon having taken his resolution, kept the secret of his expedition until the last moment ; and under one pretext or other, means were found to make the requisite preparations. It was not till they were all on board that the troops first conceived a suspicion of the Emperor’s purpose ; a thousand or twelve hundred men had embarked to regain possession of an empire containing a population of thirty millions. He set sail on Sunday, the 25th of February, 1815 ; and the next morning at ten o’clock, was not out of sight of the island, to the great annoyance of the few friends he had left behind. At this time, Colonel Sir Niel Campbell was absent on a tour to Leghorn, in order

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

that at his return he might have an audience, and get an insight into the Ex-Emperor's intended motions; but being informed by the French Consul and by Spanocchi, the Tuscan governor of the town, that Napoleon was certainly about to sail for the Continent, he hastened back; and giving chase to the little squadron in the Partridge sloop of war, which was cruising in the neighbourhood, only arrived in time to get a distant view of the flotilla, after Buonaparte and his troops had landed. Sir Niel had an interview before he left Elba with the Emperor's mother and sister, in order to learn from them which way he was gone; and was not a little nettled at their want of English plain-dealing and sincerity in not betraying their son and brother into his hands, *out of the love which he (Sir Niel) bore to his native country*. There are weaknesses and vices in the English character, which make one blush for it, notwithstanding ten redoubted sea-fights and one victory by land. We really might be ashamed to show our faces, if it were not that we never turn our backs!

There were between five and six hundred men on board the brig (the *Inconstant*) in which Buonaparte embarked. On the passage, they met with a French ship of war, with which they spoke. The Guards were ordered to pull off their caps, and lie down on the deck or go below, while the captain exchanged some words with the commander of the frigate, whom he afterwards proposed to pursue and capture. Buonaparte rejected the idea as absurd, and asked why he should introduce this new episode into his plan? He landed without any accident on the 1st of March at Cannes, a small sea-port in the gulf of St. Juan, not far from Frejus, where he had disembarked on his return from Egypt sixteen years before. A small party of the Guards who presented themselves before the neighbouring garrison of Antibes, were made prisoners by the governor of the place. Some one (more nice than wise) hinted that it was not right to proceed till they had released their comrades who had been made prisoners; but the Emperor observed that this was poorly to estimate the magnitude of the undertaking:—before them were thirty millions of men waiting to be set free! He however sent the war-commissioner to try what he could do, calling after him, ‘Take care you do not get yourself made prisoner too!’ At night-fall, the troops bivouacked on the beach. Just before, a postilion in a splendid livery had been brought to him. It turned out that this man had formerly been a domestic of the Empress Josephine, and was now in the service of the Prince of Monaco, who himself had been equerry to the Empress.¹ The postilion after expressing his great astonishment at finding the Emperor there, stated

¹ Josephine died in the interim between Buonaparte's first abdication and his return.

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

in answer to the questions that were put to him, that he had just come from Paris ; that all along the road, as far as Avignon, he had heard nothing but regret for the Emperor's absence ; that his name was constantly echoed from mouth to mouth ; and that once fairly through Provence, he would find the whole population ready to rally round him. The man added, that his laced livery had frequently rendered him the object of odium and insult on the road. This was the testimony of one of the common class of society : it was very gratifying to the Emperor, as it entirely corresponded with his expectations. The Prince of Monaco himself, on being presented to the Emperor, was less explicit. Napoleon refrained from questioning him on political matters : the conversation therefore assumed a more lively character, and turned altogether on the ladies of the former Imperial court, concerning whom the Emperor was very particular in his inquiries.

As soon as the moon had risen, which was about one or two in the morning of the 2nd, the bivouacs broke up, and Napoleon gave orders for proceeding to Grasse. There he expected to find a road which he had planned during the Empire, but in this he was disappointed ; the Bourbons having, according to the immemorial and praiseworthy usage of all hereditary governments (existing in their own right and for their own profit and pleasure) given up all such expensive works as tended only to the public benefit, to put the money in their own pockets. Buonaparte was therefore obliged to pass through narrow defiles filled with snow ; and left behind him in the hands of the municipality his carriage and two pieces of cannon, which had been brought ashore. This was termed a capture in the bulletins of the day. The municipality of Grasse was strongly in favour of the royalist cause ; but the sudden appearance of the Emperor afforded but little time for hesitation, and they came to tender their submission to him. Having passed through the town, he halted on a little height some way beyond it, where he breakfasted. He was soon surrounded by the whole population of the place ; and he heard the same sentiment and the same prayers as before he quitted France. A multitude of petitions had already been drawn up and were presented to him ; just as though he had come from Paris, and was making a tour through the departments. One complained that his pension had not been paid ; another that his cross of the Legion of Honour had been taken from him. Some of the more discontented secretly informed Napoleon that the authorities of the town were very hostile to him, but that the mass of the people were devoted to him, and only waited till his back was turned to rid themselves of the *miscreants*. He replied, ' Be not too hasty. Let them have the mortification of seeing our triumph,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

without having any thing to reproach us with.' The Emperor advanced with all the rapidity in his power. 'Victory,' he said, 'depended on my speed. To me France was in Grenoble. That place was a hundred miles distant, but I and my companions reached it in five days, and with what weather and what roads! I entered the city, just as the Count d'Artois, warned by the telegraph, was quitting the Thuilleries.'

Napoleon himself was so perfectly convinced of the state of affairs and of popular sentiment, that he knew his success in no way depended on the force he might bring with him. A piquet of gens-d'armes, he said, was all that was necessary. Every thing turned out as he foresaw. At first he owned he was not without some degree of uncertainty and apprehension. As he advanced, it is true, the whole population declared themselves enthusiastically in his favour: but he saw no soldiers; they were all carefully removed from the places through which he passed. It was not till he arrived between Mure and Vizille, within five or six leagues from Grenoble, and on the fifth day after his landing, that he met the first battalion. The commanding officer refused to hold even a parley. The Emperor without hesitation advanced alone; and one hundred grenadiers marched at some distance behind him with their arms reversed. The sight of Napoleon, his well-known costume, and his grey military great-coat had a magical effect on the soldiers, and they stood motionless. Napoleon went straight up to them, and baring his breast, said, 'Let him that has the heart now kill his Emperor!' The soldiers threw down their arms; their eyes moistened with tears; and cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* resounded on every side. Napoleon ordered the battalion to wheel round to the right, and all marched on to Paris. At a short distance from Grenoble, Colonel Labedoyere, who had been sent at the head of the 7th regiment to oppose his passage, came to join the Emperor. The impulse thus given in a manner decided the question. Labedoyere's superior officer in vain interfered to restrain his enthusiasm and that of his men. The tri-coloured cockades which had been concealed in the hollow of a drum were eagerly distributed among them; and they threw away the badge of their own and the nation's dishonour. The peasantry of Dauphiny, the cradle of the Revolution, lined the road-side: they were transported and mad with joy. The first battalion, which has just been alluded to, had shown signs of hesitation; but thousands of the country-people crowded round it, and by their shouts of *Vive l'Empereur!* endeavoured to urge the troops to decision; while others who followed in Napoleon's rear encouraged his little troop to advance, by assuring them that they would meet with success. Napoleon said he could have taken two

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

millions of these peasants with him to Paris ; but that then he would have been called the King of the *Jacquerie*. And what would it have signified if he had ? He could not help what was said. When the Revolution first broke out, the Bourbons wanted the troops to massacre the people, and called it a revolution of the mob : when the people afterwards got an army to defend them (as they needs must) against the unceasing hostility of these Bourbons and their friends for five-and-twenty years, then they said that it was the army alone that was opposed to them, and that hindered the people from showing their love and affection for them. A distinction has been taken between the feelings of the army and the people in this instance. There was none in kind, though there might be in degree ; and still less ought there to have been any ; both ought to have been equally ready to devote themselves 'to the very outrance.' This was a cause that made every man in the country a soldier, and levelled all distinctions, except between the slave and the free. Where the question was to defend the soil and the rights of the country against foreign domination, there could be no dispute about the right or duty to do so, but about the will and courage ; and in this point of view the army was not to be disqualified, but to have the preference as expressing the more manly and nervous sense of the people. Suppose it had been pretended that the English people in 1798 and 1803 were anxious for the invasion of England by the French, but that the army would not let them come ashore. This would not have been a caricature of the perversity and shifts that were resorted to, in order to prove the attachment of the French nation to the Bourbons. Thus much may be granted, that (with the exception of the army) their hatred of the Bourbons was not so great as their dread of six hundred thousand foreign bayonets ; also, their love of Buonaparte was less than their dread of six hundred thousand foreign bayonets. If Buonaparte was not popular, it is strange ; for the utmost conceivable popularity that a man can possess would only enable him with a handful of men to march from one end of a kingdom to the other, enter its capital, and take possession of a throne ! But the French people waited for the arrival of the Allies (bringing back peace and liberty with them) to express their true and unbiassed sentiments. I have no objection to this being the opinion of any one who will apply the same rule to his own or any other country but France !

In a valley through which the troops had to pass, a very affecting spectacle presented itself : a number of *communes* were assembled together, accompanied with their mayors and curates. Amidst the multitude was observed a fine-looking young man, a grenadier of the Guard, who had been missing since the time of Napoleon's landing,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and whose disappearance had given rise to suspicion. He now advanced to throw himself at the Emperor's feet : the tears glistened in his eyes, and he supported in his arms an old man of ninety years of age, whom he presented to the Emperor ;—it was his father, in quest of whom he had set off as soon as he landed in France. The Emperor after his arrival at the Thuilleries ordered a picture to be painted on this subject.

Napoleon had issued two proclamations on the road. He at first regretted not having had them printed before he left Elba ; though this could not have been done without some risk of promulgating his design. He dictated them on board the vessel, where every man who could write was employed in copying them. These copies soon became very scarce ; were often incorrect and even illegible ; and it was not till he arrived at Gap on the 5th, that he found means to have them printed. They were from that time circulated and read everywhere with the utmost avidity, and produced an effect which is not astonishing, considering the matter and the circumstances. They were as follows :—‘ Frenchmen ! The defection of the Duke of Castiglione delivered up Lyons without defence to our enemies. The army, the command of which I had entrusted to him, was by the number of its battalions, the courage and patriotism of the troops that composed it, in a condition to beat the Austrian troops opposed to it, and to arrive in time on the rear of the left flank of the army which threatened Paris. The victories of Champ-Aubert, of Montmirail, of Chateau-Thierry, of Vauchamps, of Mormans, of Montereau, of Craonne, of Rheims, of Arcis-sur-Aube, and of St. Dizier, the rising of the brave peasants of Lorraine and Champaigne, of Alsace, Franche-Compte and Burgundy, and the position which I had taken in the rear of the hostile army, by cutting it off from its magazines, its parks of reserve, its convoys, and all its equipages, had placed it in a desperate situation. The French were never on the point being more powerful, and the *elite* of the enemy's army was lost without resource ; it would have found a tomb in those vast plains which it had so mercilessly laid waste, when the treason of the Duke of Ragusa delivered up the capital and disorganised the army. The unexpected misconduct of these two generals, who betrayed at once their country, their prince, and their benefactor, changed the fate of the war ; the situation of the enemy was such that at the close of the action which took place before Paris, he was without ammunition, in consequence of his separation from his parks of reserve. In these new and distressing circumstances, my heart was torn, but my mind remained immoveable ; I consulted only the interest of the country : I banished myself to a rock in the middle of the sea ; my life was yours, and might still be useful to you. Frenchmen ! In my exile I heard your complaints and your vows ;

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

you accused my long slumber ; you reproached me with sacrificing the welfare of the country to my repose. I have traversed seas through perils of every kind ; I return among you to reclaim my rights, which are yours.'

That to the army was still more masterly and eloquent. It ran thus :—'Soldiers ! We have not been conquered : two men sprung from our ranks have betrayed our laurels, their country, their benefactor and their prince. Those whom we have beheld for twenty-five years traversing all Europe to raise up enemies against us, who have spent their lives in fighting against us in the ranks of foreign armies, and in cursing our beautiful France, shall they pretend to command or enchain our eagles, they who have never been able to look them in the face ? Shall we suffer them to inherit the fruit of our glorious toils, to take possession of our honours, of our fortunes ; to calumniate and revile our glory ? If their reign were to continue, all would be lost, even the recollection of those memorable days. With what fury they misrepresent them ! They seek to tarnish what the world admires ; and if there still remain defenders of our glory, they are to be found among those very enemies whom we have confronted in fields of battle. Soldiers ! In my exile I have heard your voice ; I have come back in spite of all obstacles and all dangers. Your general, called to the throne by the choice of the people and raised on your shields, is restored to you : come and join him. Mount the tri-coloured cockade ; you wore it in the days of our greatness. We must forget that we have been the masters of nations ; but we must not suffer any to intermeddle in our affairs. Who would pretend to be master over us ? Who would have the power ? Resume those eagles which you had at Ulm, at Austerlitz, at Jena, at Eylau, at Wagram, at Friedland, at Tudela, at Eckmuhl, at Essling, at Smolensk, at the Moskwa, at Lutzen, at Wurtchen, at Montmirail. The veterans of the armies of the Sambre and Meuse, of the Rhine, of Italy, of Egypt, of the West, of the Grand Army, are humiliated : their honourable scars are stained, their successes would be crimes, the brave would be rebels, if, as the enemies of the people pretend, the legitimate sovereigns were in the midst of the foreign armies. Honours, recompenses, favours are reserved for those who have served with them against the country and against us ! Soldiers ! Come and range yourselves under the banners of your chief : his existence is only made up of yours ; his rights are only those of the people and yours ; his interest, his honour, his glory, are no other than your interest, your honour, and your glory. Victory shall march at a charging-step ; the eagle with the national colours shall fly from steeple to steeple till it reaches the towers of Notre-Dame. Then you will be able to show your scars with honour ;

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

then you will be able to boast of what you have done : you will be the liberators of the country. In your old age, surrounded and looked up to by your fellow-citizens, they will listen to you with respect as you recount your high deeds ; you will each of you be able to say with pride, " And I also made part of that Grand Army which entered twice within the walls of Vienna, within those of Rome, of Berlin, of Madrid, of Moscow, and which delivered Paris from the stain which treason and the presence of the enemy had imprinted on it." Honour to those brave soldiers, the glory of their country !'

One does not wonder at the effect these words produced, but that it ever could be lost. That it was so was not the fault of the cause, of the leader, or the army. For the present it was the dawn of a brighter day, a raising from the depths of despair, a reprieve from dishonour, a ransom from slavery, a recall from the dead, that seemed little short of miraculous. It was night-fall when Napoleon arrived before the walls of Grenoble. He found the gates closed, and the commanding officer refused to open them. The garrison assembled on the ramparts shouted *Vive l'Empereur* ! and shook hands with Napoleon's followers through the wickets ; but they could be prevailed on to do nothing more. It was necessary to force the gates ; and this was done under the mouths of ten pieces of artillery, loaded with grape-shot. In none of his battles did Napoleon ever imagine himself to be in so much danger as at the entrance into Grenoble. The soldiers seemed to turn upon him with furious gestures : for a moment it might be supposed that they were going to tear him to pieces. But these were the suppressed transports of love and joy. The Emperor and his horse were both borne along by the multitude ; and he had scarcely had time to breathe in the inn where he alighted, when an increased tumult was heard without ; the inhabitants of Grenoble came to offer him the gates of the city, since they could not present him with the keys.¹

From Grenoble to Paris, Napoleon found no further opposition. During the four days of his stay at Lyons, where he had arrived on the 10th, there were continually upwards of twenty thousand people assembled before his windows, whose acclamations were unceasing. It would never have been supposed that the Emperor had even for a moment been absent from the country. He issued orders, signed decrees, reviewed the troops, as if nothing had happened. The military corps, the public bodies, and all classes of citizens eagerly came forward to tender their homage and their services. The Count

¹ It is a rule in philosophy to admit no more causes than are sufficient ; and the army being sufficient to bring back Buonaparte, the Tories who are great philosophers when it suits them, hold themselves bound to maintain (be the fact as it might) that in this, as in the other instances, the inhabitants took no part in it.

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

d'Artois, who had hastened to Lyons as the Duke and Duchess of Angoulême had done to Bourdeaux, like them in vain attempted to make a stand. The National Horse Guards (who were known royalists) deserted him at this crisis ; and in his flight only one of them chose to follow him. Buonaparte refused their services when offered to him, and sent the decoration of the Legion of Honour to the single volunteer who had thus shown his fidelity. As soon as the Emperor quitted Lyons, he wrote to Ney, who with his army was at Lons-le-Saulnier, to come and join him. Ney had set off from the Court with a promise to bring Napoleon 'like a wild beast in a cage to Paris.' But amidst the general confusion, distracted between his new engagements and his old obligations, thunderstruck by the Emperor's proclamations, abandoned by his troops, and overpowered by the enthusiasm of the people of the surrounding provinces—Ney, the child of the Revolution, yielded to the general impulse, and issued his famous order of the day. Well would it have been, if all his qualms had ended here, and had not afterwards followed him into the field of battle ! Ney, after what had passed, expected to be ill-received, and begged leave to retire from the service ; but the Emperor wrote back an answer, desiring him to come, and that he would receive him as on the day after the battle of Moscow ; and on his presenting himself, he rushed into his arms, calling him *the bravest of the brave* : and from that moment all was forgotten. This uniform display of magnanimity seemed only to stimulate the ingratitude of those towards whom it was exerted, and to make them determined to triumph over it by repeated acts of disloyalty !—On this subject, Napoleon was heard to say, 'If I except Labédoyère, who flew to me with enthusiasm and affection, and another individual who of his own accord rendered me important services, nearly all the other generals whom I met on my route evinced hesitation and uncertainty ; they yielded only to the impulse about them, if indeed they did not manifest a hostile feeling towards me. This was the case with Ney, with Masséna, St. Cyr, Soult, as well as with Macdonald and the Duke of Belluno ; so that if the Bourbons had reason to complain of the complete desertion of the soldiers and the people, they had no right to reproach the chiefs of the army with conspiring against them, who had shown themselves mere children in politics, and could be looked upon as neither emigrants nor patriots.'

For the rest of the way, Napoleon may be said to have made a triumphal march. And here let us take a brief retrospect of it, brief as was the triumph itself. It was indeed a merry march, the march from Cannes. Those days were jocund and jubilant—full of heart's ease and of *allegresse*. Its footsteps had an audible echo through the earth. Laughed eyes, danced hearts, clapped hands at it. It

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

'loosened something at the chest ;' and men listened with delight and wonder (wherever such were to be found) to the unbarring and unbolting of those doors of despotism which they thought had been closed on them forever. All that was human rejoiced ; the tyrant and the slave shrunk back aghast, as the clash of arms was drowned in the shout of the multitude. This is popularity ; not when a thousand persons consult and deliver the result of their decisions formally and securely, but where each of the thousand does this (before that of the others can be known) from an uncontrollable impulse, and without ever thinking of the consequences. It was the greatest instance ever known of the power exerted by one man over opinion ; nor is this difficult to be accounted for, since it was one man armed with the rights of a people against those who had robbed them of all natural rights and gave them leave to breathe by a charter. Therefore Buonaparte seemed from his first landing to bestride the country like a Colossus, for in him rose up once more the prostrate might and majesty of man ; and the Bourbons, like toads or spiders, got out of the way of the huge shadow of the Child Roland of the Revolution. The implied power to serve and buckler up a state was portentous : if it was fear and personal awe that threw a spell over them in spite of themselves, and turned aside all opposition, though it might take from the goodness of the cause, it would not lessen the prowess and reputation of the man. Even if the French had forgot themselves and him, would not their former sentiments be revived in all their force by his present appearance among them, so full of the bold and marvellous ? The very audacity of the undertaking, as it baffled calculation, baffled resistance to it, as much as if he had actually returned from the dead. Its not seeming ridiculous stamped it sublime ; any one but he making such an attempt would have been stopped at the outset ; and this shows that he possessed more influence than any other human being. It was the admiration inspired by the person and the enterprise that carried him through, and made all sanguine, anxious, full of interest for him, as for the hero of some lofty poem or high-wrought romance. He dispersed the *Compagnons du Lys*, as Ulysses slew the suitors. The only pleas I have heard in favour of the popularity of the Bourbons in comparison are, first, that the French dreaded the return of war. If peace is to be purchased at that price, it may always be obtained by setting your enemies on the throne, for they will hardly make war on themselves. The second is like unto the first, and admits the same answer. It is said the army and not the people were favourable to Buonaparte and against the Government. But the army cannot be conceived to be against the government, unless the government has been imposed by foreigners by whom they have been foiled ; and in this case, the

RESIDENCE IN THE ISLAND OF ELBA

enthusiasm of the military and the zeal of the people must be supposed to go hand-in-hand. These arguments may therefore be returned on the hands of their original fabricators or more wretched endorsers—Whig orators and parliamentary speakers, whose vanity will not let them remain silent, and who have not courage to speak the truth. The Bourbons had reckoned on the troops to defend them: if the people were for them, why did they not trust their cause to them? They did more wisely in appealing to their old friends and acquaintances, the Allies; who this time forced them back without the formality of asking any questions of the French people. This was so far at least well.

Buonaparte travelled several hours a-head of his army, often without any guard, or attended only by a few Polish lancers. His advanced-guard now regularly consisted of the troops who happened to be before him on the road, and to whom couriers were sent forward to apprise them of his approach. Thus he entered Paris, escorted by the very troops who in the morning had been ordered out to oppose him. Louis XVIII. had left the capital at one in the morning of the 20th. Marshal Macdonald had taken the command of the troops at Melun, the last place where they could make a stand. They were drawn up in three lines to receive the Emperor's troops, who were said to be advancing from Fontainebleau. There was a long pause of suspense, which seldom fails to render men more accessible to strong and sudden emotion. The glades of the forest and the winding ascent which leads to it were full in view of the troops, but presented the appearance of a deep solitude. All was silence, except when the bands played some old tunes connected with the name and family of the Bourbons. The sounds excited no corresponding sentiment among the soldiers. At length, in the afternoon, a galloping of horse was heard. An open carriage appeared, surrounded by a few hussars, and drawn by four horses. It came on at full speed; stopped, and Napoleon leaping out of it, was in the midst of the ranks which had been drawn up to oppose him. His escort threw themselves from their horses, mingled with their ancient comrades, and the effect of their exhortations was instantaneous on men, whose minds were already made up to the same purpose. There was a general shout of *Vive l'Empereur!* The last troops of the Bourbons passed over to the other side, and there was no farther obstacle between Napoleon and the capital. He arrived at the Thuilleries about nine o'clock in the evening with an escort of about a hundred horse. On alighting, he was almost squeezed to death by the crowd of officers and citizens who thronged about him, and fairly carried him up-stairs in their arms. Here he found dinner waiting; and as he was sitting down to table, an officer brought the intelligence

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

of the capitulation of the citadel of Vincennes. Meantime, the Revolution had taken full effect in Paris. Lavalette had taken possession of the Post-Office in the name of the Emperor, by which means he stopped Louis's proclamations and officially announced Napoleon's return to all the departments : and Excelmans hastened to remove the white flag which floated on the Thuilleries, replacing it by the tri-coloured one. Should any hand be found bold and strong enough to do this a third time, the arm of England is not at present long enough to take it down again !

CHAPTER LIV

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO OPENING THE CAMPAIGN

IF the return from Elba was the triumph of common sense and natural feeling, the whole of the *Hundred Days* afterwards may be described as the triumph of trifling and cross-purposes. It was the reaction of political imbecility and speculative pedantry. Buonaparte wanted a sword ; and they gave him a foil. There had been too much of blood at one period, too much of war at another ; and therefore to avoid the danger of renewing the career of foreign conquest, they would not allow him arms to defend himself ; and he was not to confiscate the property of traitors or even punish the authors of recommendations to assassinate him and overturn his government by force, because this might seem like a return to the reign of terror and a violation of liberal principles. The ardour and infatuation shown in defence of these paradoxes was in proportion to their tenuity. Men in a state of barbarism and ignorance swallow the grossest absurdities greedily, because they excite their wonder : men in a state of refinement are the dupes of the most frivolous excuses, because they exercise and afford proofs of their ingenuity. Thus what is least and most insignificant in itself, becomes of most consequence in the public opinion ; and the greatest object is lost in disputes about the evanescent shades of it. The people saw well enough that the question was, whether the country should be conquered or free, whether governments came of divine or human origin ; and that if they wanted the one, they must have Buonaparte ; if the other, the Bourbons. The leaders of the people saw this, but fifty other distinctions with it, which perplexed and distracted their attention from the main question and vital principle, covering it over like cobwebs, or eating up its sap and pith

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

like the ivy. The Fauxbourgs saw no alternative between the new and the old government; the drawing-rooms and coffee-houses, that is, the talkers and critics, saw something else between the two (and they had it) namely, their own opinion, whatever it might be. When folly arrives at a certain height, it has its root in equal baseness and want of principle. These high-flown aspirations after Utopian perfection were leagued (almost inseparably) with rank treachery and ranker cowardice. The Parisian speculators and sceptics were not afraid of Buonaparte—they were afraid of the Allies. Had he been once more at the head of conquering armies, in possession of absolute power, they would (as they did before) have crouched to him and hailed him as a God; it was because he wanted their assistance and zeal to defend them against the enemy, that they were determined to do nothing to commit themselves irrevocably in the struggle; and that they did every thing to thwart, annoy, and discountenance him, that they might have an excuse, in case of their being called upon for any painful sacrifices or exertions, to deliver up both him and themselves with ignominy to that enemy. Every one, therefore, thought this a fit opportunity to give Buonaparte his advice; to cavil, to object, to criticise, to revive old grievances, instead of meeting present exigencies or warding off future and indelible disgrace. All their resistance to Napoleon really meant that they would not make any very violent resistance to the Allies, so that this Roman sternness and independent deportment was only a cover (in case of reverses) for the undisguised, and unqualified display of French volatility and national abjectness. It must be confessed that this is in part also the misfortune of the cause. Men in a savage and rude state of society are slaves, because they do not know what liberty is: in a state of civilization and knowledge, they want the courage to defend it. Liberty and independence are also nearly another name for disunion and party-spirit. Those who wish to learn the history of revolutions and reform, have only to read the account of the battle of Bothwell Bridge in *Old Mortality*; where, while the Tory cavalry were charging their ranks, the Covenanters were debating about left and right-hand defections. So it was and so it will be, while the nature of things lasts. Three hundred men, willing to be slaves, put implicit faith in and follow their leader, and carry all before them. Three hundred men, determined to think and act for themselves, to give way in nothing, and sacrifice no jot of their opinion as to what is right, while they are disputing and refining, are split into as many different factions as there are persons, and are set upon and bound hand-and-foot by their adversaries, who will allow them no freedom of opinion at all. This, it should seem, they think a less evil than the other, because men's self-love is sooner brought to

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

submit to a barefaced wrong than voluntarily to sanction the slightest difference of sentiment, which might compromise their own, or by being the next thing to the truth, require all their tenaciousness of principle and purpose to keep the separation clear. The proximity of the one staggers and makes them uneasy: the other their reason despises. The lovers of liberty and reform are the natural victims and dupes of the slaves of power. For the latter think only of what *is*, or of what is for their advantage, and cling to it with equal servility and fury: the former are thinking of what is best, though it may be quite hopeless, and their hold of this is less sure and fixed. Reformers, lovers of improvement and innovation, are those in whom the ideal faculty prevails over sense and habit; and this being the case, they will be apt to be satisfied too easily with their own imaginations and opinions; and provided they can indulge in these, care little about having them realized, of which there is in general small chance. If a certain degree of good is within their possession or reach, they grow indifferent to it; raise their standard of perfection still higher; become extravagant and fastidious in their ends to the neglect of all practical means to enforce them; and, like the dog in the fable (the type of this class of philosophers and politicians) constantly lose the substance for the shadow. These persons are, doubtless, useful in their generation; but they are the worst marplots and stumbling-blocks in the way of the accomplishment of their own schemes. They also often play the part of the dog in the manger; and envy and try to supplant those who have shown more practical ability than themselves; and would sooner see the object of their whole lives mangled and made a mockery of, than that it should be guarded by other hands than theirs or by other means than they approve of.

Buonaparte, however, in his new circumstances struggled hard to fall in with the humour and demands (many of them reasonable in themselves) of these people, and to make his iron will bend to their veering speculations; and considering the novelty of the attempt, performed wonders, though they sometimes tried his patience to the utmost. It is a pity that this compromise with the idealists turned out as it did, and as Buonaparte feared it would. M. Benjamin Constant, one of the most respectable and candid of the party, and one of his oldest antagonists, was sent for soon after the Emperor's arrival, to make known the views and expectations of what was called the Constitutional or liberal party in France, and as a proper medium to communicate the Emperor's own sentiments and changes of opinion. An interview took place at the Thuilleries on the 24th of April; and the account of it throws too much light on this important point to be omitted here. Buonaparte began the conversation himself, and affected to disguise

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

or soften nothing either in his past conduct or present dispositions. 'The nation,' he said, 'has had a respite of twelve years from every kind of political agitation, and for one year has enjoyed a respite from war. This double repose has created a craving after activity. It requires or fancies it requires a *Tribune* and popular assemblies. It did not always require them. The people threw themselves at my feet, when I took the reins of government. You ought to recollect this, who made a trial of opposition. Where was your support, your strength? Nowhere. I assumed less authority than I was invited to assume. At present all is changed. A feeble government, opposed to the national interests, has given to these interests the habit of standing on the defensive and evading authority. The taste of constitutions, for debates, for harangues appears to have revived. Nevertheless, it is but the minority that wished all this, be assured. The people, or if you like the phrase better, the multitude wish only for me. You would say so, if you had seen this multitude pressing eagerly on my steps; precipitating themselves from the tops of the mountains; calling on me, seeking me out, saluting me. On my way from Cannes hither, I have not conquered, I have administered. I am not alone (as has been pretended) the Emperor of the soldiers; I am that of the peasants, of the plebeians of France. Accordingly, in spite of all that has happened, you see the people come back to me. There is sympathy between us. It is not with the privileged classes. The *noblesse* have been in my service; they thronged in crowds into my ante-chambers. There is no place that they have not accepted, asked for, solicited. I have had the Montmorencys, the Noailles, the Rohans, the Beauvaus, the Mortemarts in my train. But there never was any analogy. The steed made his curvets, he was well broke in; but I felt him quake under me. With the people, it is another thing. The popular fibre responds to mine. I have arisen from the ranks of the people: my voice acts mechanically upon them. Look at those conscripts, the sons of peasants: I never flattered them; I treated them roughly. They did not crowd round me the less; they did not for that cease to cry, *Vive l'Empereur!* It is that between them and me there is one and the same nature. They look to me as their support, their safeguard against the nobles. I have but to make a sign, or rather to look another way, and the nobles would be massacred in all the provinces. So well have they managed matters in the last ten months! But I do not desire to be the king of a mob. If there are the means to govern by a constitution, well and good. I wished for the empire of the world; and to ensure it, a power without bounds was necessary to me. To govern merely France, it is possible that a constitution may be better. I wished for the empire of the world; and who would not have done so

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in my place? The world invited me to rule over it. Sovereigns and subjects alike emulously bowed the neck under my sceptre. I have seldom met with opposition in France; but still I have encountered more of it from some obscure and unarmed Frenchmen, than from all those kings so resolute just now no longer to have a man of the people for their equal!—See then what appears to you possible: let me know your ideas. Public discussion, free elections, responsible ministers, the liberty of the press, I have no objection to all that:—the liberty of the press especially: to stifle it is absurd. I am convinced on this point. I am the man of the people: if the people really wish for liberty, let them have it. I have acknowledged their sovereignty. It is just that I should lend an ear to their will, nay, even to their caprices. I have never been disposed to oppress them for my pleasure. I entertained great designs: fate has disposed of them. I am no longer a conqueror: nor can I be one. I know what is possible and what is not. I have no farther object than to raise up France and bestow on her a government suitable to her. I have no hatred to liberty. I have set it aside when it obstructed my path: but I understand what it means; I was brought up in its school: besides, the work of fifteen years is overturned, and it is not possible to recommence it. It would take twenty years and the lives of two millions of men to be sacrificed to it. As for the rest, I desire peace; but I can only obtain it by means of victory. I would not inspire you with false expectations. I let it be said that there are negotiations going on; there are none. I foresee a hard struggle, a long war. To support it, I must be seconded by the nation; but in return, I believe they will expect liberty. They shall have it:—the circumstances are new. All I desire is to be informed of the truth. I am getting old. A man is no longer at forty-five what he was at thirty. The repose enjoyed by a constitutional king may suit me: it will still more certainly be the best thing for my son.’¹

Agreeably to these professions and suggestions, which were in fact echoed on every side, the new constitution, which was soon after promulgated, guaranteed the most perfect religious liberty; individual liberty was also guarded against the abuses of authority and the vexations of the subalterns of power; exile was not allowed to be inflicted as a punishment at the discretion of government; the liberty of the press for the first time obtained the protection of a jury; the independence of the judicial authorities was secured; military tribunals

¹ Buonaparte did not seem to M. Constant to be changed in his own views or feelings, but to be convinced that circumstances had changed, and to have made up his mind with his usual firmness to conform to them. He says, he listened to him with deep interest: there was a breadth and grandeur of manner as he spoke, a calm serenity seated on a brow ‘covered with immortal laurels.’

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

were confined to military offences ; no levy of soldiers could take place without the concurrence of the legislature ; a direct responsibility was attached to ministers, and the Chamber of Representatives was placed upon a popular basis and invested with a solid power. Certainly, the use they made of it was not calculated to render that power of long duration, nor to inspire any very high respect for the public spirit or practical good sense of popular institutions. What they seemed to have to do was not to support Buonaparte against the common enemy, but to vent their personal pique and spleen against him, as the power that trenched most closely upon their own, though their whole influence and very existence was bound up with his. While it required every exertion and the most entire unanimity to maintain his government or the independence of the country for a single hour against a league that was ready to overwhelm both, all that occupied them was the setting limits to a power that already hung by a thread, and protesting against the dreams of universal conquest, while their own imminent doom stared them in the face. Such folly would only be contemptible if the dreadful consequences with the wilful blindness to those consequences did not make it something worse.

The old war-horse, however, submitted to the bit, and moved on in his constitutional trammels pretty well. The only occasion on which he grew restive and unmanageable was in the Council of State on the question of Confiscation of the Emigrants. On that occasion, impatient of the rein which opinion imposed on him, and teased with the swarm of idle objections that buzzed round him, Buonaparte burst out in his old way to the great scandal of the ideologists present, who were too fine gentlemen to let him punish assassins employed to waylay him,¹ or to confiscate the property of nobles who hired them. 'You urge me,' he cried, 'into a path which is not mine. You enfeeble, you chain me. France seeks me and no longer finds me. The public opinion was excellent ; it is now execrable. France inquires what is become of the old arm of the Emperor, that arm of which she stands in need to repulse Europe. What is it they tell me of goodness, of abstract justice, of natural law ? The first law is necessity : the first justice is towards the country. You wish that men whom I have loaded with wealth should make use of it to conspire against me in foreign countries. That cannot be, that shall not be : every Frenchman, every soldier, every patriot would have a right to require an account from me of the riches left in the power of the enemy. When peace is made, we may

¹ At one time M. Benjamin Constant ran to the Emperor in great haste to assure him that if he punished M. Vitrolles for instigating various attempts of this kind, no honourable man could continue to serve him. This was certainly making themselves a character for liberality at his expense. The heroes of paradox and first principles were afraid not only of the swords but of the opinions of their adversaries.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

see what is to be done. Every day has its task, every circumstance its law, every individual his nature. Mine is not to be an angel. Gentlemen, I repeat, it is right that men should find, it is right that they should see *the old arm of the Emperor.*¹ Thus while traitors conspired and hostile armies moved on, the liberal party would have tied his hands behind him with their flimsy refinements and effeminate theories, as Dalilah bound Samson when the Philistines were upon him ! Of all this moderate or old opposition party, Carnot was the only one who saw the question in a right point of view, as a struggle for existence or non-existence, and who in the stand he made for speculative principles, did not neglect what was essential in practice. The reason was, he was more attached to a great cause than to his own favourite notions of it ; and in the union of integrity of opinion with energy of purpose, bore a resemblance to some of the old English republicans.

The new Constitution, with the *Acte Additionel*, was offered to the suffrages of the French people at large, and accepted by them by a majority of above a million and a half of votes to four thousand odd against it. Louis did not put himself to this kind of probation ; it would have been inconsistent with his dignity and pretensions to do so ; since his rights were by the supposition superior to and independent of the choice of the people, which was merely a vulgar appendage to them. That of itself, with me, is decisive of the whole question. This event was celebrated in the *Champ-de-Mars*, held on the 1st of June in the open space facing the Military School, where the electors of the Departments, the representatives of the people, and the deputations from the army, met in an immense concourse. The Imperial and National Guard and the troops of the line were drawn up in squares in the *Champ-de-Mars*. Napoleon appeared in the midst of them like a new Charlemagne, surrounded by his brothers, his court, and the members of his government, on a magnificent throne. An altar was raised in the centre, and the ceremony began by invoking the God of battles.¹ After the religious solemnity, a deputation of five hundred electors advanced to the foot of the throne, and pronounced an eloquent and patriotic address. The result and number of the votes was then proclaimed ; and Napoleon, turning towards the side where the electors were, said aloud,—‘ Emperor, Consul, Soldier, I hold all from the people : in prosperity, in adversity, in the field of battle, in council, on the throne, in exile, France has been the sole object of all my thoughts and actions.’ Having ended his discourse, the Emperor proceeded to the altar with his escort, swearing to observe and maintain the Constitutions of the State ; the oath was repeated by the ministers and the

¹ M. de Talleyrand was not the officiating priest on this, as he had been on a former occasion.

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

electoral deputations. The eagles were then distributed among the troops; cries of *Vive l'Empereur* resounded on all sides; and the crowd (whether of men or women) as they looked on, were filled with admiration and delight, and seemed to think that the enemy could never again pierce through those numerous and dense phalanxes, winding slowly along, as if incapable of flight!

The day following (the 2nd of June) the Emperor gave a second *fête* to the Deputies of the army and the Electors of the Departments, who were assembled in the vast galleries of the Louvre. There was a fresh distribution of eagles; and those who received them from the hands of Napoleon renewed their protestations of devotion and fidelity. This banquet gave universal contentment.

The Legislative Body met on the 3rd of June; and from the first showed that pragmatistical spirit of opposition which soon ruined all. It might be supposed that every man in it was actuated with the ambition to boast with the Abbé de Pradt that 'but for him Buonaparte would still have been the greatest man in the world.' If the English soldiers on the morning of the battle of Waterloo, instead of looking to their arms, had busied themselves in discussions whether the Duke was a Whig or a Tory, and had refused to fight till he had given a pledge for universal suffrage or Catholic emancipation, the battle would not have ended as it did. But it may be said that a nation or its representatives are not to be dragooned into obedience like an army. And the answer is plain. When a nation is threatened with the loss of its independence, and with having an obnoxious yoke imposed on it by foreigners, whoever sets up for being more than a soldier in his country's cause, is less than a citizen; plucks up a spirit to oppose the government, when all the danger arises from another source; and makes his love of liberty a stalking-horse to hide his fear, his vanity or his leaning to the enemy. Buonaparte in his answer to the addresses of the two Chambers a few days after did not disguise his dissatisfaction with their mistimed scruples; and gave them a lesson, which, in proportion as it was just and incontrovertible, only irritated their self-love and lurking animosity the more.

'The struggle in which we are engaged is serious. The seductions of prosperity are not the danger which menaces us at present. It is under the *Caudine Forks* that foreigners wish to make us pass. The justice of our cause, the public spirit of the nation, and the courage of the army are strong grounds to hope for success: but should we encounter reverses, it is then that I should trust to see displayed all the energy of a great people. It is then that I should find in the Chambers proofs of their attachment to the country and to me. It is in times of difficulty that great nations like great men unfold all the energy of their

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

character, and become objects of admiration to posterity. I will set out to-night and proceed to join the army. The movements of the different corps of our enemies render my presence indispensable. The Constitution is our rallying-point : it should be our pole-star in these stormy times. Every public discussion tending directly or indirectly to diminish the confidence which should be placed in its arrangements, would be a misfortune to the state : we should then find ourselves in the midst of rocks without compass or pilot. The crisis in which we are involved is arduous. Let us not imitate the example of the Lower Empire, which, pressed on all sides by the Barbarians, rendered itself the scoff of posterity by entering into abstract discussions at the very moment when the battering-ram was at the gates of the city. In all circumstances, my conduct will be direct and firm. Aid me to save the country. First representative of the people, I have contracted the obligation which I now renew to employ in more tranquil times all the prerogatives of the crown and the little experience which I have acquired, to ameliorate our institutions.'

One would have supposed that an appeal like this might have raised those to whom it was addressed to take a view of their circumstances from the same lofty stand of reason and history ; that it would have imparted some of its manly sense and spirit to the most backward ; and that all petty scruples and base fears would have been 'shook to air, like dew-drops from the lion's mane : ' instead of which it seemed only to confirm them the more in their errors, and being warned against it, make them the more resolutely bent to pass under the *Caudine Forks*, and become the laughing-stock of the present generation and of posterity. Buonaparte reached the army the next day. Within a week all that he feared and predicted as possible had happened : but he had done all that could be done both by his efforts and advice to avert it.

From his first return to Paris, war was inevitable. In fact, his re-appearance was an insult offered to the Allies and turning all their boasted triumphs into a jest. In vain was all they had done, if one man alighting in a kingdom could by the mere force of his name and the odium attached to theirs, put a stop to all their fine schemes of legitimacy and the easy parcelling out of the world between them. But from the very certainty that they would feel no scruples and would use the most violent means to force the old government back upon them again, the French lay under every obligation of honour or independence to cast it off with the very first opportunity or chance of doing so. Buonaparte, however, lost not a moment's time in notifying his return to the foreign sovereigns and expressing his desire to ratify the peace with France which had been concluded after his abdication.

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

This pacific overture on his part received no other answer (if it might be called one) than the declaration of the 25th of March, placing him out of the protection of the law. If Napoleon had succeeded in his first battle and had been impelled once more into the career of victory by this repeated sullen scorn of his advances to peace, the whole of the bloodshed and mischief at the end of twenty years would (with the same decency as before) have been laid to the door of his inordinate ambition and love of conquest. Napoleon had perhaps flattered himself with some hope of the forbearance of Austria; but this hope (if any such existed) was destroyed by Murat, who alarmed at the intrigues of the Bourbons to displace him from his throne had made war upon Austria; was defeated; and thus led the Emperor Francis to suspect that this hair-brained enterprise was undertaken with the connivance of and in concert with Buonaparte. This gave the Emperor of Austria a pretext for a great deal of indignation and resentment against his son-in-law, as if while he was holding out to him the lure of peace, he was urging the madman of Naples to make war upon him in an affected panic at having his own throne undermined. Thus Murat did his kinsman all the mischief in his power, first by declaring against him, and then by prematurely declaring for him. Napoleon had sent an envoy to Joachim in the beginning of February to apprise him of his intended return to France and begging him to rest quiet for the present. But Murat (his brain heated with finding the game once more afoot and his own crown not sure on his head) thought that Napoleon would anticipate him if he did not stir at once; resolved to proclaim the independence of Italy himself; proceeded across the marches of Ancona to Bologna for that purpose, where they only asked him why he made no mention of his and their old master; was attacked and repulsed by the Austrians, and landed a fugitive in Provence. His Queen who had embarked on board an English commodore under an engagement to be taken to France was carried to Trieste. Murat's progress had alarmed the Pope and the Grand-Duke, one of whom fled to Genoa, the other to Leghorn. In the beginning of April, Lucien Buonaparte arrived at Fontainebleau, and brought the first news of Murat's irruption into Italy. A *Chargé d'Affaires* from the Pope accompanied him, who came to make known to Napoleon that if he did not guarantee the possession of Rome to his Holiness, he would instantly depart for Spain. The messenger was well received by the Emperor, and returned with assurances that it was his intention to fulfil in every respect the treaty of Paris.

On the 25th of April the four principal powers, recovering from their surprise but not the less resolved to revenge their mortification, signed a treaty, by which each agreed to furnish one hundred and fifty

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

thousand men to recommence the contest; and it was computed that a million of men, composed of all the nations of Europe, would be assembled by the end of July on the frontiers of France. Sweden and Portugal alone had refused to furnish their contingent. Peace between England and the United States of America had been concluded towards the end of February; so that the English troops being no longer detained in Canada in the hope (as it was loudly recommended at the time) of 'exterminating the last example of democratic rebellion' in that quarter of the world, were re-embarked for Europe in the very nick of time to extirpate it there. On the 13th of April, the Duke of Wellington had fixed his head-quarters at Brussels, while those of Blucher were at Liege. The French frigate *Melpomene* was taken, after a severe action, on the coast of Naples by the *Rivoli*, an English 74; but some days afterwards, the British commodore in the Mediterranean received orders to respect the French flag, war not being declared. A French frigate brought the Emperor's mother from Naples to France. On the night of his arrival at Paris, the Emperor had ordered General Excelmans to pursue the King's Guard at the head of three thousand cavalry, and to capture, disperse, or drive it beyond the frontiers. A part of it was surrounded and disarmed at Bethune, the rest were disbanded by the Count d'Artois at Neuve-Eglise. General Excelmans took possession of the horses, magazines, and baggage of this corps, who were obliged to disguise themselves and escape from the indignation of the peasants in various directions. Count Reille repaired to Flanders with twelve thousand men to reinforce Count d'Erlon who commanded on that frontier; and Napoleon deliberated whether he might not commence hostilities with the thirty-six thousand men thus placed at his disposal, by marching on the 1st of April on Brussels and rallying the Belgian army under his colours. The English and Prussians were at this time feeble in point of numbers, dispersed, and without chiefs: the Duke of Wellington being at Vienna and Blucher at Berlin. But there were several objections to this plan, which was of too petty and indecisive a character to have any great attractions in itself. First, it was an object not to preclude the chance of peace by a hasty movement and to throw the odium of the resumption of hostilities on the enemy: secondly, it would be necessary in order to collect the given number of troops, to leave the fortresses towards Belgium without garrisons, which could not be done with safety; thirdly, the first signal of the renewal of war would have encouraged the discontented, and Napoleon above all things did not wish a gun to be fired till the Bourbons were removed from the French territory and the whole of the country rallied round the Imperial government, which did not happen before the 20th of

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

April. Marseilles and Bourdeaux had no sooner hoisted the tri-coloured standard than the war in La Vendée broke out in the beginning of May, and deprived Napoleon of twenty thousand troops when he most needed them.

On his return he found the army in a most deplorable condition : it could send only ninety-three thousand effective men into the field, a force hardly sufficient to guard the fortresses and the principal sea-ports ; in which last there were neither ships nor sailors, except one man-of-war and three frigates at Toulon and two at Rochefort. Every exertion was used by Buonaparte during the three months of his power to restore its strength and spirit, and place it on a footing to repel once more the combined efforts of all Europe. During this period, he was employed fifteen or sixteen hours a-day. Some persons who see only the little in every thing, tell you that he was taken up the greater part of the time in arranging the precedence of the princes and princesses of his family for the ceremonial of the *Champ-de-Mai*. What with organising the army to defend the Chambers and organising the Chambers to betray the army, he had work enough on his hands. Eight hundred thousand men were thought sufficient to fight Europe even-handed, and to surround France with a wall of brass which no human power could break through. But this would be a work of some time. By the 1st of June, he had raised the army to upwards of five hundred thousand men, besides prodigious advances in every other branch of military preparation. The artillery-stores left after all the previous losses at Antwerp, Wesel, Mayence, and Alexandria were adequate to supply the largest armies for a length of time ; but the men wanted clothing, arms, horses, and discipline. The first cares were directed to the reviving the spirit and past recollections of the army. The numbers borne by the regiments since 1794 were restored to them. Lists were ordered to be made out of those that were proper to officer the different corps ; and this gave employment to all the officers on half-pay. All the veterans were recalled to their colours ; no coercive law was necessary to enforce obedience ; they came in crowds, labourers, tradesmen, mechanics, all quitted their work, resumed their old uniforms, and cheerfully rejoined their regiments. This summons, though it was expected to produce more, yielded about one hundred and thirty thousand men to the troops of the line. The levy of two hundred battalions of picked National Guards produced eighty thousand more towards the end of May. Twenty regiments of marines were formed by drilling thirty thousand sailors that had belonged to the different squadrons of the French navy. A demand for two hundred and fifty thousand men was to be proposed to the Chambers in the course of July ; but this they took care to evade in the mean

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

time, being more afraid of their defenders than of their enemies and claiming the privilege of women, as if it would be a want of gallantry in the Allies to use a body of merely speculative politicians ill. The number of retired or pensioned soldiers and officers amounted to a hundred thousand, of whom thirty thousand were fit for garrison-duty ; they instantly answered the call of the War-Minister, and their zeal and experience were highly useful to direct the new levies as well as to ensure the preservation of the fortresses.

Fire-arms formed one of the most important objects of attention. There was a sufficient quantity of sabres, but a want of muskets. The Imperial factories would in ordinary times furnish monthly twenty thousand stand of new arms : by the extraordinary activity and encouragements used, this number was doubled. Workmen were also employed in repairing old muskets. There was displayed at this momentous period the same activity in the capital as in 1793, and better directed, though without the same success. There existed at that period the fury of civil discord, which seems a necessary ingredient in French patriotism : they must first whet their swords on one another—otherwise, they are of too mild and candid a disposition to come to extremities with an enemy. The clothing of the army was another difficulty ; and this was got over by advancing large sums of money to the cloth-manufacturers beforehand. The contractors delivered twenty thousand cavalry-horses before the 1st of June ; ten thousand trained horses had been furnished by the dismounted *gendarmerie*. Twelve thousand artillery-horses were also delivered by the 1st of June, in addition to six thousand which the army already had. The facility with which the Ministers of Finance and of the Treasury provided for all these expences astonished every body, as it was necessary to pay for every thing in ready money. The system of public works was at the same time resumed throughout France : ‘ It is easy to see,’ said the workmen, ‘ that the great contractor is returned : all was dead, now every thing revives.’ To account for this lavish expenditure, an opinion prevailed that the Emperor on his return had found a hundred millions of livres in gold at the *Thuilleries*. The King had indeed quitted Paris with such precipitation that he had not been able to carry away the crown-plate, valued at six millions ; nor the treasury-chests of the Departments, containing fifty millions more. But the chief resource which Napoleon found on his return was in the good-will of the people, and in the confidence of the great French and Dutch capitalists arising out of it. Voluntary donations were also numerous, and in some departments exceeded a million. At the military parades, he was often presented with bundles of bank-bills ; and on his return to the palace had to give the Minister of the Treasury

PROCEEDINGS PREVIOUS TO THE CAMPAIGN

eighty or a hundred thousand francs, which he had received in this manner.

On the 1st of June, then, the effective strength of the French armies amounted to five hundred and fifty-nine thousand men.¹ Thus in two months, the Minister of War had levied four hundred and fourteen thousand men, making nearly seven thousand per day. Of this number, the effective of the regular army amounted to three hundred and sixty-three thousand men, that of the army extraordinary to one hundred and ninety-six thousand men :—of the effective of the line, two hundred and seventeen thousand were under arms, clothed, disciplined, and fit to enter immediately into the field. They were formed into seven grand corps, besides corps of observation, scattered along the whole line of the frontiers ; but the principal part of the forces was cantoned near Paris, and on the frontier of Flanders ; all the troops of the line had quitted the fortresses on the 1st of June, leaving them to be guarded by the army extraordinary. The first corps, commanded by Count d'Erlon, was in the neighbourhood of Lille, consisting of four divisions of infantry with four regiments of twelve thousand men each, of one division of light cavalry, and six battalions of artillery. The second corps, commanded by Count Reille, was cantoned round Valenciennes ; being composed much in the same manner, but stronger, some of the regiments having three battalions. The third corps, commanded by Vandamme, was assembled near Mezieres. The fourth, under Count Gerard, was at Metz ; the fifth corps, under the command of Count Rapp, was stationed in Alsace, and the sixth under Count Lobau at Laon. The seventh corps was commanded by Marshal Suchet at Chambery, and consisted of two divisions of infantry of the line, and two of picked National Guards, with light cavalry and batteries. The first corps of observation, that of Mount Jura, was commanded by General Lecourbe ; the second, that of the Var, by Marshal Brune ; the third, that of the eastern Pyrenees, commanded by General Decaen, was assembled at Thoulouse ; the fourth, under General Clausel, was at Bourdeaux. These generally consisted of one division of infantry of the line, a number of National Guards, a regiment of cavalry, with three or four batteries. The four corps of cavalry-reserve under Marshal Grouchy were all quartered between the Aisne and the Sambre : the first corps of light cavalry being under Count Pajol ; the second of dragoons under the orders of Count Excelmans ; the third and fourth of cuirassiers were commanded by Count Milhaud and Count Kellermann. The Imperial Guard was formed of four

¹ I cannot help thinking (such is my prejudice in favour of my countrymen) that Napoleon ought to have had more than a fifth of this number to make sure of beating the English.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

regiments of the young guard, four of the middle guard, four of the old guard, four regiments of cavalry, and had ninety-six pieces of ordnance. The rest of the army was in La Vendée or dispersed through the various provinces, on the frontiers, or in the garrison-towns. The ninety fortresses possessed by France were armed, palisaded, provisioned, and commanded by experienced officers.

Buonaparte, after his return from the campaign of Austerlitz, had several times thought of fortifying Paris; but the fear of alarming the inhabitants and the rapid succession of events prevented him from putting the design in execution. The circumstances of the last year convinced him more than ever of its importance. He now set about it in good earnest. He entrusted the Engineer-General Haxo with the superintendence of the works. The heights of Montmartre, those of the Mills, of Chaumont and Pere La Chaise were first mounted with defences. He next ordered the Canal de l'Ourcq from St. Denis to the Basin of Vilette to be finished, and left the bank to be thrown up in the form of a rampart. From the heights of Pere La Chaise to the Seine, the right was supported by works established at L'Etoile under the cannon of Vincennes: a trench of five thousand feet in length joined the barrier of the Throne with the redoubt of L'Etoile. These works, which were to be extended on the other side of Paris to St. Cloud, Neuilly, and back again to St. Denis, were finished by the 1st of June, and defended by six hundred pieces of cannon and by five or six thousand gunners taken from the arsenals, and by volunteers from the Charenton and Polytechnic schools. Paris with proper spirit offered the certain resource of a hundred thousand men for its defence in case of necessity without weakening the regular army. Lyons, the second city in the empire, was fortified in like manner.

During the month of May, France (all but La Vendée) being pacified, and war from without certain, the Emperor meditated on two different plans of campaign. The first was to wait for the Allies, to let them get entangled among the fortresses, and give them battle under the walls of Paris, which they could not reach before the middle of August, by which time Napoleon would nearly have doubled his forces, and called forth all the resources of the country and the capital, while the Allies would be compelled to leave a fourth of their troops behind them to watch the fortresses in their rear. He would in this case have two hundred and forty thousand troops, with Paris in a state of complete defence, to oppose to four hundred and fifty thousand of the enemy. Suchet would on the same supposition have to defend Lyons with twenty-five thousand men against sixty thousand, which was all that the Allies would be able to muster in that quarter. The second plan was to anticipate the advance of the Allies, to attack and if possible

BATTLE OF LIGNY

beat the Anglo-Prussian army in Flanders, before the Russians, Bavarians, and others could arrive on the Rhine. This latter plan presented many advantages. It suited the impatient character of the nation ; if it succeeded, Belgium would revolt and join France ; should her army be beaten, England would probably make peace, and the other Allied troops advance no farther ; and if it failed, Buonaparte might still fall back though with disadvantages, and concentrating his forces in the heart of the empire defend Paris to the last extremity. But to execute the latter plan, it was necessary to take the field by the middle of June, by which time he could only collect an army of one hundred and forty thousand men. But could he with this army oppose the two hostile armies, consisting of one hundred and four thousand English and Dutch, and one hundred and twenty thousand Prussians and Saxons, in all two hundred and twenty-four thousand men ? In 1814, he had with only forty thousand made head against an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men commanded by Marshal Blucher and Prince Schwartzemberg, and by the two Emperors and the King of Prussia in person. He therefore did not hesitate in adopting this resolution, particularly as the troops opposed to him were some of them considered of inferior quality, were of different nations and interests, and were led by two different commanders-in-chief.

CHAPTER LV

THE BATTLE OF LIGNY

MARSHAL SOULT (Duke of Dalmatia) was named Major-General of the army. On the 2nd of June he issued a spirited order of the day ; and immediately set out from Paris to visit the fortresses in Flanders and the different corps of the army. The fourth corps, commanded by Count Gerard, set out from Metz on the 6th of June, passed the Meuse, and arrived at Philippeville on the 14th. Count Belliard assumed the command of Metz and the frontier of the Sarre : he took care to mask this movement by occupying the frontier with detachments of the National Guard, drawn out from the garrisons of Metz, Longwy, &c. The Imperial Guard quitted Paris on the 8th of June, and marched towards Avesne. The 1st corps set out from Lille, and the 2nd from Valenciennes to occupy a station between Maubeuge and Avesne. This movement was masked by sending detachments from the garrison to triple the advanced posts ; so that the Allies being deceived,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

imagined that the whole army had formed a junction on the left, instead of in the centre. The 6th corps set out from Laon, and marched on Avesne : while the 4th corps of the cavalry of reserve concentrated itself on the Sambre.

The Emperor set out from Paris on the 12th in the morning ; breakfasted at Soissons ; slept at Laon ; gave his last orders for the arming of that place, and arrived at Avesne on the 13th. On the 14th at night, the army encamped in three directions ; the left, more than forty thousand strong, composed of the 1st and 2nd corps, on the right bank of the Sambre, at Ham-sur-Heure, and Solre-sur-Sambre ; the centre, more than sixty thousand strong, composed of the 3rd and 6th corps, of the Imperial Guard, and of the reserves of cavalry, at Beaumont, where the head-quarters were ; the right, more than fifteen thousand strong, formed of the 4th corps and a division of cuirassiers, at Philippeville. The camps were established behind small hills, a league from the frontier, in such a way that the fires were not perceived by the Allies, who in fact had no knowledge of the encampment. On the 14th at night, the returns proved that the force of the army was one hundred and twenty-two thousand four hundred men, and three hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. The same evening, the Emperor issued the following order of the day :—‘ Soldiers ! this is the anniversary of Marengo and of Friedland. Then, as after Austerlitz and Wagram, we were too generous. We gave credit to the protestations and oaths of the princes, whom we suffered to remain on their thrones. Now, however, coalesced among themselves, they aim at the independence and at the most sacred rights of France. They have commenced the most unjust of aggressions. Are we no longer the same men ? Soldiers ! at Jena, when fighting against these very Prussians, now so arrogant, you were as one to two, and at Montmirail as one to three. Let those among you, who have been in the hands of the English, recite the story of their prison-ships, and the evils which they suffered in them. The Saxons, Belgians, and Hanoverians, the soldiers of the Confederation of the Rhine, groan at the thought of being obliged to lend their arms to the cause of princes, enemies of justice and of the rights of nations. They know that this Coalition is insatiable : after having devoured twelve millions of Poles, twelve millions of Italians, a million of Saxons, six millions of Belgians ; it will, if permitted, also swallow up the states of the second class in Germany. Fools that they are ! A moment of prosperity blinds them. The oppression and the humiliation of the French people are out of their power. If they enter France, there will they find their tomb. Soldiers ! we have forced marches to make, battles to wage, perils to encounter ; but with constancy, the victory will be ours :—the rights,

BATTLE OF LIGNY

the honour of the country will be recovered. For every Frenchman who has a heart, the moment has now arrived either to conquer or perish !'

On the night of the 14th the Allied troops were very tranquil in their cantonments. The Prusso-Saxon army formed their left, the Anglo-Belgian army the right. The first, commanded by Marshal Blücher, was a hundred and twenty thousand strong, *viz.* eighty-five thousand infantry, twenty thousand cavalry, fifteen thousand artillery, with three hundred pieces of cannon. It was divided into four corps. The first under General Zieten was next to the English, having its head-quarters at Charleroi; the second under General Pirch was at Namur, farther back; the third under General Thielman was in the environs of Dinant, and was to rally at Ciney, to the southward: the fourth under Bulow was behind the three others at Liege. The whole of these were to assemble at Fleurus behind Charleroi, and eight leagues from Namur, fourteen from Ciney and sixteen from Liege. Marshal Blücher's head-quarters were at Namur, sixteen leagues from the Duke of Wellington's at Brussels. The Anglo-Belgian army, under the command of the latter, was formed of twenty-four brigades, of which nine were English, ten German, five Dutch and Flemish; and of eleven divisions of cavalry, consisting of sixteen English regiments, nine German, and six Dutch, besides a battalion at Ostend and four regiments in the Flemish fortresses. The proportions were thirty-seven thousand English (ten thousand being cavalry), forty-two thousand Germans, twenty-five thousand Dutch and Belgians, in all one hundred and four thousand men. They were divided into two grand corps of infantry. The first under the orders of the Prince of Orange, composed of two English and three Belgian divisions, were at Enghien, Soignes, Braine-le-Comte, and Nivelles. The second corps, commanded by Lord Hill, and composed of four English divisions and one of Brunswick troops, was quartered at Brussels, Ath, Halle, and Ghent. Lord Uxbridge commanded the cavalry, and was at Grammont. The great park of artillery was at Ghent. The rallying point for the whole army was at Quatre-Bras, two leagues on the right of the Prussians; and from the distance between these scattered points, it would take two whole days to assemble both armies on the same field of battle.

In the night between the 14th and 15th, scouts returned to the French head-quarters at Beaumont, and reported that every thing was tranquil at Namur, Brussels, and Charleroi. To have thus succeeded in concealing the movements of the French army for the last two days was a great point gained. The Prussians must now fall back behind Fleurus or give battle in that position, without any hope

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

of receiving support from the Anglo-Belgian army. The character of the two generals-in-chief opposed to Napoleon was taken into the account by him. The hussar habits of Marshal Blucher, his activity and adventurous spirit, formed a strong contrast to the circumspect movements and slow marches of the Duke of Wellington. If the Prussian army were not the first attacked, it would proceed with more alacrity and eagerness to the succour of the English army than the English army would hasten to its relief. All the efforts of Napoleon were therefore first directed against the Prussians.

The three French columns commenced their march at day-break on the 15th. The advanced-guard of the left, under Prince Jerome, met and routed the advanced-guard of the Prussian corps of General Zieten, and took possession of the bridge of Marchiennes, driving the Prussians on Charleroi. The cavalry of General Pajol, forming the advanced-guard of the centre, commenced its march at three in the morning: it was to have been sustained by General Vandamme's infantry, which did not, however, set out in time. The Emperor therefore took the lead with his Guard; and entered Charleroi, preceded by the light cavalry of Pajol, which followed the enemy sword in hand. The right of the army, commanded by Count Gerard, surprised the bridge of Chatelet at an early hour: the whole column came up in the evening. From Charleroi to Brussels is fourteen leagues: the road passes by Gosselies, Frasnes, Quatre-Bras, Gemappe, and Waterloo. Not far from Charleroi, another causeway passes through Gilly to Namur. The corps of Zieten had hastily evacuated Charleroi by these two, one division retiring by the road to Brussels and the other on Namur. They were followed by the French on each. Count Reille and Count d'Erlon marched on Gosselies and were to push on to Quatre-Bras. Marshal Grouchy with the reserve of cavalry followed by the third corps, marched on Gilly, between which and Fleurus General Zieten had taken post, backed by a wood. General Reille gained possession of Gosselies after a slight resistance. Marshal Ney having just arrived on the field of battle, the Emperor immediately ordered him to proceed to Gosselies, to take the command of the whole of the left wing, composed of the first and second corps, with the cavalry of Lefebvre Desnouettes and General Kellermann's heavy cavalry (in all forty-seven thousand men)—he was to attack whatever troops he met on the road from Gosselies to Brussels, and to take post across that route beyond Quatre-Bras; keeping military possession of the ground by placing strong advanced-guards on the three openings to Brussels, Namur, and Nivelles, so as to cut off completely, if possible, the communications between the English and Prussian armies. The division of Zieten's corps, which had defended

BATTLE OF LIGNY

Gosselies, wheeled to the right on Fleurus : Count Reille caused it to be followed by General Gerard's division, while he himself, with his cavalry and three other divisions, marched on Quatre-Bras. Prince Bernard of Saxony, who had the command of four thousand of the troops of Nassau, hearing the firing in the direction of Charleroi, went and posted himself at Frasne before Quatre-Bras ; but he was dislodged by General Lefebvre Desnouettes, who threatened to turn and cut off his retreat, and he was obliged to retire to Gemappe. Ney joined the troops soon after ; but having heard the cannonade on Fleurus, and being informed by General Gerard that there were considerable forces in that direction, he thought it prudent to halt, sending on outposts to Frasne and Quatre-Bras.

Vandamme and Grouchy were stopped at Gilly by a report that there were two hundred thousand Prussians behind the woods in front of Fleurus. The Emperor went to reconnoitre ; and judging that there could be no more than from eighteen to twenty thousand of the enemy, gave orders to advance. A successful charge of the four squadrons on duty, conducted by General Letort, pierced through two squares, and destroyed the whole twenty-eighth Prussian regiment ; but the intrepid Letort was mortally wounded. This general was one of the most distinguished of the French cavalry officers. He had not an equal in the art of conducting a charge or in communicating the electric spark to the men as well as to the horses : at his voice and example, all fear vanished. At night Vandamme and Grouchy occupied the woods of Trichenaye and Lambusart near Fleurus. During the night between the 15th and 16th the French head-quarters were at Charleroi ; Blucher was still at Namur, Wellington at Brussels. The first Prussian corps under Ziethen, enfeebled by the loss of two thousand men, retired to Sombref behind Fleurus. The second and part of the third corps marched all night from Namur and joined the first on the morning of the 16th. The remainder of the third corps came up during the battle, and the fourth corps under Bulow did not reach Gembloux, ten leagues from Sombref, till it was over.

On the 15th, at seven o'clock in the evening, the Duke of Wellington received a dispatch from Marshal Blucher, to state that hostilities had commenced, and that a strong French reconnoitring party had sabred some of his advanced posts. This did not hinder the English general from going to a ball, where a second dispatch found him at eleven o'clock the same evening with the intelligence, that ' the French had entered Charleroi that morning and continued to march in order of battle on Brussels ; that they were one hundred and fifty thousand strong : and that the Emperor was at their head.' This seemed to rouse the Duke from his apathy, so far at least as to give over the dance,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and to issue orders to the army to break up its cantonments, and be in readiness to march towards the scene of action. The rest was left to chance. This apparent negligence, indifference and want of plan or preparation on the part of the English commander, which has been brought against him as a reproach, was perhaps highly creditable to his self-knowledge. He felt that what he chiefly had to do was to bring the men together, to stand by and see them fairly fight it out, and that any deliberate movement or interference on his part might be fatal. He wisely determined, therefore, (as it should seem) to make the battle a contest of personal courage, and to decline the trial of military skill altogether, both before and at the time ; but it must be confessed that the backs of his troops, however fitted for it, very nearly broke down under the double charge imposed on them. The third Belgian division belonging to the Anglo-Belgian army being six leagues from Quatre-Bras, was the only one that could arrive there the next morning. The remainder could not unite at that point before the next night or the following day. The artillery and the cavalry were in the latter predicament : the troops having been called out during the night, the Brunswick and the fifth English division which were at Brussels, commenced their march on Quatre-Bras early in the morning ; but this was still two leagues from Fleurus, where the Prussians were encamped.

The French army bivouacked on the night between the 15th and 16th in a square of four leagues ; the left under Marshal Ney having its head-quarters at Gosselies, with its out-posts at Quatre-Bras, and General Gerard's division on the route to Fleurus ; the centre, with the cavalry of reserve and the Guard, between Charleroi and Fleurus, and the right in front of the bridge of Chatelet. It was equally in its power to press on the Prusso-Saxon or the Anglo-Belgian army, being already placed between them ; and their communications being in a great measure cut off. All the Emperor's manœuvres had succeeded to his wishes ; he could henceforth attack his enemy in detail, unless they chose to abandon their ground and unite again at Brussels. Fortune however took the affair into her own hands.

Marshal Ney received an order in the night to push on at day-break beyond Quatre-Bras and occupy a strong position there. General Flahaut was the bearer of this order. General Gerard's division was ordered to remain where it was, that it might be ready to act under the immediate directions of the Emperor ; who with the centre and right marched to engage the Prussians, before the fourth corps under Bulow could come up or the English collect their scattered forces. The skirmishers met at the village of Fleurus ; and those of the enemy having fallen back, showed their army drawn up in order of battle, their

BATTLE OF LIGNY

left at Sombref, the centre at Ligny, the right at St. Amand, with the reserves on the heights of Bry, occupying a line of nearly four miles in extent. It was about ten in the morning when the French army halted and formed, having the third corps in front of Fleurus, with Gerard's division a mile and a half to its left, and the fourth corps (Gerard's) in the centre; Marshal Grouchy, the cavalry of Pajol and Excelmans forming the right, the Guard and Milhaud's cuirassiers being placed in reserve. The Emperor with a few attendants visited the chain of outposts on the heights, and from the windmills attentively reconnoitred the position of the enemy's army. It presented a force certainly exceeding eighty thousand men. Its front was covered by a deep ravine, but its right was exposed and had the troops at Quatre-Bras in its rear. It was evident Marshal Blucher did not expect to be attacked so soon, and that the Anglo-Belgians would not have time to come up to the support of his right. A staff-officer now arrived from Ney to say that he had not executed the prescribed movement, in consequence of reports which made him apprehensive of being turned (he was thinking how he should make his peace a second time with the Bourbons, in case he should be beaten)—but that he was ready to execute it, if still required to do so. The Emperor blamed him for having already lost eight hours; repeated his orders; and added that as soon as he had taken position, he should detach a column of eight thousand infantry with Lefebvre Desnouette's cavalry, and twenty-eight pieces of cannon (still leaving him thirty-two thousand men to keep the English in check) by the causeway of Namur to the village of Marchais, whence it should attack the heights of Bry in the Prussian rear. Ney received this order at half-past eleven; the detachment might set off at noon, and reach the village of Marchais by two. At two o'clock, therefore, Napoleon ordered a change of front on Fleurus, with the right in advance. This movement extended all along the line and was calculated to enclose the Prussian army between two fires, on the arrival of the succours in the rear. Every thing indicated the ruin of the Prussian forces. Count Gerard having approached the Emperor to ask for some instructions respecting the attack on the village of Ligny, the latter observed, 'The fate of the war may be decided in three hours. If Ney executes his orders well, not a gun of the Prussian army will escape: it is taken *in flagranti delicto*.'

At three in the afternoon, the third corps attacked the village of St. Amand, the fourth advancing on Ligny, while Marshal Grouchy drove back the left of the Prussians. The remainder of their third corps under Thielman arrived during the battle through Sombref: this increased their force to ninety thousand men. The French army, including the sixth corps, which remained constantly in reserve, was

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

seventy thousand men : less than sixty thousand were engaged. The village of Ligny was taken and retaken four times. It was here that Count Gerard acquired such imperishable glory, showing equal intrepidity and talent. St. Amand was contested in like manner, but was carried by General Gerard, who having received an order to attack on the left, overthrew all that opposed his passage with the bayonet, and gained possession of half the village, when he fell mortally wounded. He had distinguished himself at the passage of Tesino in 1800, and contributed much to the victory of Lutzen in 1813, where, though twice wounded, he refused to be carried off the field of battle till he learnt that the enemy were routed. The third corps maintained itself on the other side of St. Amand. It was now half-past five, and the Emperor was manœuvring with the Guard on Ligny, when General Vandamme sent word that a column of thirty thousand of the enemy was advancing on Fleurus. This was a false alarm. An hour afterwards, this supposed English column turned out to be that of Count d'Erlon, who having been left in reserve not far from Quatre-Bras hastened to support the attack on St. Amand. The Guard then resumed its movement upon Ligny ; General Pecheux at the head of his division passed the ravine, supported by Count Gerard's division, the infantry, cavalry, artillery, and Milhaud's cuirassiers. The reserves of the enemy were repulsed by the bayonet, the centre of his line was pierced ; forty pieces of cannon, eight stand of colours, and a number of prisoners were the trophies of this day. Marshal Grouchy, Generals Excelmans and Pajol excited the highest admiration by their behaviour. The Emperor, satisfied with Count Gerard, who commanded the fourth corps, intended to have given him a Marshal's staff, and regarded him as one of the hopes of France. General Monthion was charged with the pursuit of the Prussian left wing. They estimated their loss at twenty-five thousand killed, wounded, or prisoners, without including several thousands who disbanded, and ravaged the banks of the Meuse to Liege. Many of the Allied generals were killed or wounded. Marshal Blucher was thrown down by a charge of cuirassiers, and trampled on by their horses ; but they passed on without seeing him. It was already night ; to which circumstance this officer owed his escape, though much bruised and hurt. The total loss of the French was six thousand nine hundred and fifty men killed or wounded. The disproportion between these losses arose from two causes ; viz. 1. The reserves of the French were kept out of the reach of the enemy's cannon ; 2. The third and fourth corps, which were in front of the battle, were sheltered by inequalities of ground, while the Prussian soldiers were heaped together in large masses on the amphitheatre of hills from St. Amand and Ligny to the heights of Bry. The bullets from the

BATTLE OF LIGNY

French batteries which missed the first lines struck the reserves, so that not a single shot was thrown away.

The Prince of Orange, who was at Braine-le-Comte, did not receive the Duke of Wellington's order to unite his troops before day-break on the 16th. He then hastened to Quatre-Bras to support Prince Bernard of Saxony, who had taken post between Quatre-Bras and Gemappes. Sensible of the importance of this position, he had remained there all the morning with eight or nine thousand Belgians and troops of Nassau. If therefore Ney had marched on this point at day-break, he would have anticipated the movement of the Prince, and have been able to attack the divisions of the English army on their march and while advancing on the separate causeways of Nivelles and Brussels. At noon, having received fresh orders, he marched forward with little more than half his force, leaving the remainder to watch Fleurus and secure his retreat. He commenced skirmishing at two, but it was not till he heard the cannonade at Ligny, that he attacked the Belgians in good earnest. The Prince of Orange was soon overthrown; but he was supported by the division of Brunswick and the fifth English division, who arrived in great haste and some disorder, having marched eight leagues that morning, and having neither cavalry nor artillery. The contest was warmly renewed, and many were left dead on the field, particularly the reigning Duke of Brunswick. The forty-second Highland regiment, having formed in a square to sustain a charge of cuirassiers, was broken through and cut to pieces. The French sharp-shooters had reached the farm of Quatre-Bras, where the first division of the English guards and Alten's division (the third) arrived, marching in double-quick time along the causeway of Nivelles. It was then that Marshal Ney felt the want of his second line which he had left three leagues behind him, and sent for it, but it was then too late. He however fought on with his usual intrepidity and sustained the conflict till night, taking up his head-quarters at Frasne, a mile and a quarter from Quatre-Bras. He was here joined by Count d'Erlon, who had turned back as soon as St. Amand was carried, and thus his troops were useless in both actions. The loss of the Anglo-Belgians in this action was stated at nine thousand men, that of the French at between three and four thousand; the difference arising from the want of artillery on the part of the English. If with half his force Marshal Ney made such havoc among the troops opposed to him, with the whole of it (which he was told to employ) he might have overwhelmed them.

The troops bivouacked on the field of battle at Ligny, Marshal Grouchy at Sombref. Blucher retreated fighting in two columns on Wavres, one by Tilly to the left, and the other by Gembloux more to the right, where Bulow arrived from Liege at eleven o'clock at night.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

The Duke of Wellington passed the night at Quatre-Bras, the English troops continuing to join him by the two causeways, till the morning of the 17th, and amounting by that time to fifty thousand men. General Pajol moved in pursuit of the Prussian army at day-break on the 17th. Marshal Ney had received an order to march on Quatre-Bras at the dawn of day and make a spirited attack on the English rear-guard, while Count Lobau was to proceed along the causeway of Namur to take the English army in flank. Marshal Grouchy set out with Excelmans' corps of cavalry and the third and fourth corps of infantry to support General Pajol, and follow up Blücher with rapidity and energy, in order to prevent him from rallying. He was positively enjoined always to keep between the causeway leading from Charleroi to Brussels and the Prussian general, so as to be in constant communication with the main army, and able to rejoin it when required. The third division of the second corps, which had suffered much at the battle of Ligny, remained to keep possession of the field of battle, and to succour the wounded. The Emperor the next morning visited the field of battle, and caused every assistance to be given to the wounded. The loss of the Prussians was enormous, six of their dead bodies being to be seen for one of the French. This sacred duty fulfilled, Napoleon galloped on to reach Quatre-Bras with Lobau's cavalry. Arriving within sight of this place, he found it still occupied by a body of French cavalry. Ney had not stirred. A party of five hundred horse having been sent in the direction of Frasne to see what was passing there, some skirmishing took place between them and Ney's troops, who had mistaken the red lancers of the Guard for English. Officers were dispatched to press Ney's advance; at the same time Count Lobau moved forward. An English female sutler, who was taken prisoner, reported that Lord Wellington had not learnt the disaster of Ligny till late at night; when he ordered a retreat on Brussels, leaving Lord Uxbridge with the cavalry as a rear-guard. That officer retired as soon as he perceived Count Lobau's force. The troops on the left still manifesting no disposition to quit their encampment, the Emperor's patience was exhausted, and he sent orders directly to the heads of columns. This had some effect. When Ney appeared, the Emperor reproached him with his slowness and indecision, and with the three most precious hours he had made him lose. He stammered an excuse, that he believed the whole English army was still at Quatre-Bras. At length the army moved forward, the Emperor marching at its head. The rain fell in torrents; the roads were hardly passable; and this, though it impeded the march of the French, enabled them to do the English cavalry much mischief with their artillery, and to take a number of prisoners, among others Captain Elphinstone. About six

BATTLE OF LIGNY

o'clock in the evening, the weather grew extremely foggy ; so that it was impossible to distinguish the amount of the English rear-guard, which had evidently been just reinforced ; and as the forest of Soignes was not far off, probably wished to keep that position during the night. To ascertain this point, Milhaud's cuirassiers threatened to charge ; when the English unmasked fifty or sixty pieces of cannon, for all their army was there. There was not day-light left to commence the attack that night, as Napoleon had wished. The French army took post in front of Planchenoit, with its head-quarters at the farm of Cailloux, about three miles from the village of Mont St. Jean.

The Emperor with the 1st, 2nd, and 6th corps of infantry, the Imperial Guard, a division of Pajol's light cavalry, and the two corps of Milhaud's and Kellermann's cuirassiers, in all sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and six men and two hundred and forty-two pieces of cannon, was encamped across the high-road to Brussels, four leagues and a half from that city ; having before him the Anglo-Belgian Army, ninety thousand strong, with two hundred and fifty-five pieces of cannon, and its head-quarters at Waterloo. Marshal Grouchy, with thirty-four thousand men and one hundred and eight pieces of cannon, was supposed to be at Wavres, but was in fact in front of Gembloux, having lost sight of the Prussian army which had reached Wavres, where its four corps, now amounting to seventy-five thousand men, was united. Marshal Grouchy having set out in pursuit of Blucher on the 17th, had proceeded to Gembloux, whence he sent reconnoitring parties towards Liege and Wavres, in the track of the enemy's rear-guard. This done, he made his troops halt, though he had only marched two leagues. He afterwards learnt that the chief forces of the Prussians had taken the route of Wavres ; but it was then past six o'clock, the soldiers were at supper, and he thought it would be time enough to follow in the morning. This resolution was the principal cause of the loss of the battle of Waterloo by the French. At ten o'clock at night, the Emperor dispatched an officer to the Marshal, who was concluded to be near Wavres, to inform him that there would be a great battle the next day ; that the Anglo-Belgian army was posted in front of the forest of Soignes, its left supported by the village of La Haye ; and that he ordered him to detach seven thousand men of all arms and six pieces of cannon before daylight to St. Lambert, to be near the sight of the Grand Army, and to co-operate with it ; that as soon as Blucher had evacuated Wavres, either towards Brussels or in any other direction, he should instantly march with the rest of his troops to support those already sent to St. Lambert. At eleven o'clock at night, an hour after this dispatch was sent off, a report from Marshal Grouchy, dated from Gembloux at five o'clock, stated that he was

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

The Duke of Wellington passed the night at Quatre-Bras, the English troops continuing to join him by the two causeways, till the morning of the 17th, and amounting by that time to fifty thousand men. General Pajol moved in pursuit of the Prussian army at day-break on the 17th. Marshal Ney had received an order to march on Quatre-Bras at the dawn of day and make a spirited attack on the English rear-guard, while Count Lobau was to proceed along the causeway of Namur to take the English army in flank. Marshal Grouchy set out with Excelmans' corps of cavalry and the third and fourth corps of infantry to support General Pajol, and follow up Blücher with rapidity and energy, in order to prevent him from rallying. He was positively enjoined always to keep between the causeway leading from Charleroi to Brussels and the Prussian general, so as to be in constant communication with the main army, and able to rejoin it when required. The third division of the second corps, which had suffered much at the battle of Ligny, remained to keep possession of the field of battle, and to succour the wounded. The Emperor the next morning visited the field of battle, and caused every assistance to be given to the wounded. The loss of the Prussians was enormous, six of their dead bodies being to be seen for one of the French. This sacred duty fulfilled, Napoleon galloped on to reach Quatre-Bras with Lobau's cavalry. Arriving within sight of this place, he found it still occupied by a body of French cavalry. Ney had not stirred. A party of five hundred horse having been sent in the direction of Frasne to see what was passing there, some skirmishing took place between them and Ney's troops, who had mistaken the red lancers of the Guard for English. Officers were dispatched to press Ney's advance; at the same time Count Lobau moved forward. An English female sutler, who was taken prisoner, reported that Lord Wellington had not learnt the disaster of Ligny till late at night; when he ordered a retreat on Brussels, leaving Lord Uxbridge with the cavalry as a rear-guard. That officer retired as soon as he perceived Count Lobau's force. The troops on the left still manifesting no disposition to quit their encampment, the Emperor's patience was exhausted, and he sent orders directly to the heads of columns. This had some effect. When Ney appeared, the Emperor reproached him with his slowness and indecision, and with the three most precious hours he had made him lose. He stammered an excuse, that he believed the whole English army was still at Quatre-Bras. At length the army moved forward, the Emperor marching at its head. The rain fell in torrents; the roads were hardly passable; and this, though it impeded the march of the French, enabled them to do the English cavalry much mischief with their artillery, and to take a number of prisoners, among others Captain Elphinstone. About six

BATTLE OF LIGNY

o'clock in the evening, the weather grew extremely foggy ; so that it was impossible to distinguish the amount of the English rear-guard, which had evidently been just reinforced ; and as the forest of Soignes was not far off, probably wished to keep that position during the night. To ascertain this point, Milhaud's cuirassiers threatened to charge ; when the English unmasked fifty or sixty pieces of cannon, for all their army was there. There was not day-light left to commence the attack that night, as Napoleon had wished. The French army took post in front of Planchenoit, with its head-quarters at the farm of Cailloux, about three miles from the village of Mont St. Jean.

The Emperor with the 1st, 2nd, and 6th corps of infantry, the Imperial Guard, a division of Pajol's light cavalry, and the two corps of Milhaud's and Kellermann's cuirassiers, in all sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and six men and two hundred and forty-two pieces of cannon, was encamped across the high-road to Brussels, four leagues and a half from that city ; having before him the Anglo-Belgian Army, ninety thousand strong, with two hundred and fifty-five pieces of cannon, and its head-quarters at Waterloo. Marshal Grouchy, with thirty-four thousand men and one hundred and eight pieces of cannon, was supposed to be at Wavres, but was in fact in front of Gembloux, having lost sight of the Prussian army which had reached Wavres, where its four corps, now amounting to seventy-five thousand men, was united. Marshal Grouchy having set out in pursuit of Blucher on the 17th, had proceeded to Gembloux, whence he sent reconnoitring parties towards Liege and Wavres, in the track of the enemy's rear-guard. This done, he made his troops halt, though he had only marched two leagues. He afterwards learnt that the chief forces of the Prussians had taken the route of Wavres ; but it was then past six o'clock, the soldiers were at supper, and he thought it would be time enough to follow in the morning. This resolution was the principal cause of the loss of the battle of Waterloo by the French. At ten o'clock at night, the Emperor dispatched an officer to the Marshal, who was concluded to be near Wavres, to inform him that there would be a great battle the next day ; that the Anglo-Belgian army was posted in front of the forest of Soignes, its left supported by the village of La Haye ; and that he ordered him to detach seven thousand men of all arms and six pieces of cannon before daylight to St. Lambert, to be near the sight of the Grand Army, and to co-operate with it ; that as soon as Blucher had evacuated Wavres, either towards Brussels or in any other direction, he should instantly march with the rest of his troops to support those already sent to St. Lambert. At eleven o'clock at night, an hour after this dispatch was sent off, a report from Marshal Grouchy, dated from Gembloux at five o'clock, stated that he was

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

still in that village, ignorant of the direction Blucher had taken. A second officer was dispatched to him at four in the morning to reiterate the order sent at ten at night; and soon after another message came from Grouchy, to say that he had learnt where Blucher was, and that he would follow him in the morning. Thus, when it most needs their aid, do Frenchmen support the cause of their country, which in this case was the common cause of human nature. While sanguine of success or urged on by necessity, they take their chance in fight gallantly enough: but as soon as there is a doubt of the event, and there is only principle to fix them, you have no longer any hold upon them: they either go over to the enemy to put an end to an uneasy state of vacillation, or are quite at fault, and slip out of the difficulty how they can. There is an utter want of self-reliance and fortitude. It was madness in Buonaparte to trust any of them out of his sight for a single instant, if he could possibly help it.

CHAPTER LVI

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

DURING the night the Emperor gave all the necessary orders for the battle of the next day, though every thing seemed to indicate that it would not take place. In the four days since hostilities had commenced, he had by the most skilful manœuvres surprised the enemy's armies, separated them, and gained an important victory. This was much for his glory; but not enough for the situation in which he was placed. Not having been able to bring the Anglo-Belgian army into action in the afternoon of the 17th, it was probable that the Duke of Wellington and Marshal Blucher would profit by the night to cross the forest of Soignes and unite before Brussels. They would place the French army in a most critical position, as the two hostile armies would then have received all their reinforcements; among others the six thousand English lately disembarked from America at Ostend; and Napoleon durst hardly cross the forest of Soignes to encounter more than double his numbers; yet he had no time to lose, the Russians, Austrians, &c. being about to cross the Rhine, and advance on the Marne, while the fifth corps, left for the defence of Alsace, was only twenty thousand strong.

Full of meditation on these important subjects, the Emperor went out on foot at one o'clock in the morning, accompanied by the Grand-

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

Marshal : his design was to follow the English army and attack it, in case of retreat, notwithstanding the obscurity of the night. He visited the whole line of main-guards. The forest of Soignes appeared like one continued blaze : the horizon between that forest, Braine-la-Leude, the farms of La Belle-Alliance, and La Haye, were resplendent with the fires of numerous bivouacs ; a profound silence reigned. The Anglo-Belgian army was wrapt in sleep, owing to the fatigues of the two preceding days. Arrived near the wood of Hougomont, he thought he heard the noise of a column in march : if so the rear-guard ought to quit its position, and pursue the enemy in their retreat. But the noise ceased, and the rain continued to fall in torrents. It was half-past two o'clock. Several officers sent to reconnoitre agreed that the English had made no movement. At four the scouts brought in a peasant, who had acted as guide to a British brigade going to take up a position at Ohain. The deserters from a Flemish regiment confirmed the account, that their army was preparing for battle.

Buonaparte blames the English general for giving battle in these circumstances, and with the defiles of a forest in his rear, so that if defeated, retreat was impossible. I cannot say I do. It was certainly worth running some risk to beat him ; and a second object was to stake the character of the English soldiery (for courage at least) against the French. Setting these two considerations aside, he might care as little about himself or about the cause of the Allies, as every one else does at present. The French troops bivouacked in a deep mud ; and the officers thought it impossible to give battle on the following day, as the artillery could hardly move for the moisture of the ground. The dawn having begun to appear, the Emperor returned to head-quarters, full of satisfaction at the great fault committed by the English general, though apprehensive that the bad weather would prevent his taking advantage of it. But the atmosphere became more clear, and at five o'clock he perceived some feeble rays of that sun, which before its setting was to witness the triumph of the despot and the slave throughout the world, and as long as it shall continue to roll round this orb of ours !

The Anglo-Belgian army was drawn up in order of battle across the causeway leading from Charleroi to Brussels, in front of the forest of Soignes, crowning a large flat, from which the ground gradually sloped forward. The right, composed of the 1st and 2nd English divisions and the Brunswick division, under Generals Cook and Clinton, was near the road to Nivelles, a detachment of the Guards occupying the castle of Hougomont, about a mile in front. The centre, or 3rd English division and 1st and 2nd Belgian divisions (Generals Alten, Collaert, and Chassé) was close upon the farm of Mont St. Jean,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

between the road to Nivelles and Charleroi, with one of its brigades at the farm of La Haye-Sainte between the two armies. The left, or 5th and 6th English divisions and 3rd Belgian division, commanded by Picton, Lambert, and Perchoncher, had its right towards the causeway of Charleroi, and its left behind the village of La Haye, where it had a strong detachment. The reserve was at Mont St. Jean, where the roads from Charleroi and Nivelles meet. The cavalry in three lines guarded the rear of the troops, which extended about three miles. There was a ravine in front. The 4th English division, under General Colville, were placed as flankers on the right from Halle to Braine-la-Leude, and a brigade of cavalry at the village of Ohain on the left. The forces shown by the Allies amounted to about ninety thousand men, of which not quite forty thousand were English.

At eight o'clock the Emperor's breakfast was served up; to this many general officers sat down. 'The enemy's army,' said Napoleon, 'is superior to ours by nearly a fourth: there are, nevertheless, ninety chances in our favour to ten against us.' 'Without doubt,' said Marshal Ney, who had just entered, 'if the Duke of Wellington were simple enough to wait for your Majesty; but I am come to announce that his columns are already in full retreat, and are disappearing in the forest of Soignes.' 'You must have seen badly,' replied the Emperor; 'it is too late, he would expose himself to certain ruin by such a step: he has thrown the dice—they are now for us!' At this moment, officers of artillery, who had rode over the plain, stated that the artillery could manœuvre though with difficulty, which would be greatly abated in another hour. The Emperor mounted horse immediately, and went forward to the skirmishers opposite La Haye-Sainte, again reconnoitred the English line, and ordered General Haxo to approach nearer to it to see if any entrenchments were thrown up. He then, after a few moments' reflection, dictated the order of battle which was taken down by two of his Generals, seated on the ground. The aide-de-camps took it to the different corps already under arms, and who now moved forward, marching in eleven columns. At nine o'clock, the heads of the four columns of the first line arrived where they had to form: at the same time were perceived, at unequal distances, the seven other columns, as they descended from the heights; the drums and trumpets sounded '*To the field*,' and the bands struck up airs which recalled the memory of a hundred victories to the minds of the soldiery:—the earth seemed proud of being trod by such intrepid warriors! The spectacle was magnificent; and being seen to great advantage from the heights of Mont St. Jean must have inspired the opposite army, though not with fear, with admiration.

The close columns moved with so much precision that no confusion

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

arose, each occupying the place assigned to it in the mind of its chief. The army was drawn up in six lines on each side of the causeway of Charleroi, the two first of infantry, having the light cavalry at each of its wings; the third and fourth of cuirassiers; the fifth and sixth of the cavalry of the Guard, with the infantry of the Guard drawn up across the road a little in the rear of these six lines, and the 6th corps and the cavalry of General Daumont and Subervie in column on each side of it in the interval between them. To the extreme left, the light cavalry of the 2nd corps formed across the road of Nivelles, near the woods of Hougomont. The 2nd corps itself under General Reille formed the two first lines of infantry between the causeway of Nivelles and that of Charleroi. It was in three divisions, extending above a mile, the first commanded by Prince Jerome facing Hougomont, the centre by General Foy, the third by General Bachelu, approaching the road to Charleroi, near the farm of La Belle-Alliance. The artillery was in the intervals between the brigades. Behind these two lines of infantry were placed Kellermann's cuirassiers, at a distance of two hundred yards; and behind them at the same distance, the cavalry of the Guard, each in two lines. On the right of the causeway of Charleroi, the 1st corps under Count d'Erlon formed the two first lines of infantry, reaching from La Belle-Alliance nearly to Frichermont, where the light cavalry was drawn up opposite La Haye; behind this body of infantry were two lines of Milhaud's cuirassiers; and behind them, the lancers and chasseurs of the Guard. The hospitals and parks were in the rear. At half-past ten o'clock, the whole movement was completed, and all the troops at their stations. The most profound silence reigned on the field of battle. The Emperor then went through the ranks, the soldiers expressing the utmost enthusiasm: the infantry raised their caps on their bayonets, the cuirassiers their helmets on the point of their sabres. Victory appeared to hover over them: the old soldiers admired this new order of battle and endeavoured to guess at the ulterior views of their general. Meanwhile, the Emperor gave his last orders and proceeded at the head of the Guard to the heights of Rossomme, where he dismounted, and where he had a complete view of the two armies, as the prospect extended far to the right and left of the field of battle. He could discern the movements of the English general, and had the reserve of the Guard at hand to send them where the emergency of the case might require.

A large quantity of artillery was placed on the eminences in front of La Belle-Alliance and a little to its right, to support the principal attack which was to be made on La Haye-Sainte by two divisions of the 1st corps (D'Erlon's) and two divisions of the 6th (Lobau's), while

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

two other divisions of the 1st corps should march on the village of La Haye. The light cavalry of the 6th corps placed in the centre on the route of Charleroi and that of the 1st stationed to the right of Frichermont were to participate in this attack, as also the cavalry and Guards. Its object was to turn the left of the English army, and cut off its right (which was its strongest) from the road to Brussels. The Emperor preferred turning the left of the hostile army to its right—1st, because he would thus intercept its communication with the Prussians who were at Wavres; 2nd, because the left appeared the most feeble; 3rd, because he himself was in momentary expectation of being joined on that side by Grouchy. Whilst every thing was preparing for the grand attack, Prince Jerome's division on the left commenced a fire of musketry at the wood of Hougomont. The British unmasked forty pieces of cannon. General Reille advanced the battery of his second division, and the Emperor sent an order to Kellermann to employ his light artillery. The wood was carried several times and as often lost, being defended with great bravery by a division of the English Guards. General Foy's division was engaged, and prodigies of valour were performed on both sides, the English Guards covering the wood and the avenues of the castle with their dead, who had parted with their blood dearly. In this contest, which lasted great part of the day, the wood was at length taken; but the castle and farm-yard in which some hundreds of English had enclosed themselves, still obstinately held out. The Emperor ordered it to be attacked by a battery of eight howitzers, which setting fire to the roofs and barns, the French remained masters of the position.

Marshal Ney was entrusted with conducting the chief attack in the centre: no one was better fitted for a service of this kind. He had sent word that every thing was ready, and that he only waited the signal to begin. Before giving it, the Emperor wished to cast a last glance over the whole field, when he perceived in the direction of St. Lambert a dark spot (dark indeed) which looked to him like troops. He asked the Adjutant-General what he saw near St. Lambert? He answered, 'I think I see five or six thousand men; it is probably a detachment from Grouchy.' All the glasses of the officers were now turned that way. Some thought there were no troops, but merely trees: others that there were columns stationary there, others that they were in motion. In this state of uncertainty and without further deliberation, Napoleon sent for General Daumont and ordered him with his light cavalry and that of Subervie to advance towards these troops, to effect a junction with them if they were Grouchy's, and keep them in check if they were enemies. These three thousand cavalry proceeded rapidly to a distance of nearly four miles, and drew up in

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

line of battle to the right of the army. Presently after, a black Prussian hussar was brought in prisoner, from whom and from a letter of which he was the bearer it was learnt that the column seen at St. Lambert was the advanced-guard of Bulow, who was coming up with thirty thousand fresh troops; that Blucher was with his army at Wavres, and that Grouchy had not appeared there. The Duke of Dalmatia instantly dispatched a messenger to reiterate the order to Grouchy to march without a moment's delay on St. Lambert and take Bulow's corps in the rear. Whether he had received the orders sent to him in the night or not, it was thought he must now be at hand, as he had proposed to set out at dawn, and it was only three leagues from Gembloux to Wavres. But no one heard or saw any thing of him. The Emperor on this ordered Count Lobau to follow and support the cavalry of General Daumont, choosing a good position where he might with ten thousand men keep thirty thousand in check, and to redouble the attack as soon as he found that Grouchy was in the rear of the Prussians. Napoleon thus found himself enfeebled on the field of battle by the loss of ten thousand men, so that he no longer had more than fifty-nine thousand troops against ninety thousand. 'We had ninety chances for us this morning,' he said to Soult; 'the arrival of Bulow makes us lose thirty; but we have still sixty against forty; and if Grouchy repairs the dreadful fault which he committed yesterday by amusing himself at Gembloux and sends on his detachment with rapidity, the victory will be thereby only the more decisive, for the corps of Bulow must in that case be entirely lost.'

It was noon: the skirmishers were engaged all along the line, but there was no real action except on the left at Hougomont. The troops of Bulow were still stationary on the extreme right; they seemed to wait till their artillery had passed the defile. The Emperor sent an order to Marshal Ney to commence the attack. Eighty guns soon made an immense havoc through all the left of the English line; one of its divisions was entirely destroyed. While this attack was unmasked, the Emperor attentively observed the movements of the English general: he made none on his right, but the Emperor perceived a grand charge of cavalry preparing on the left, and he galloped to the spot. It had taken place before he came up; a column of French infantry were repulsed, two eagles and seven pieces of cannon taken. A brigade of Milhaud's cuirassiers was brought up and ordered to charge the enemy's cavalry. They did so: the English cavalry was broken by the onset, and a great part of it left on the field: the guns were retaken, and the infantry fell into their ranks again. Charges of infantry and cavalry now followed thick upon each other; at length, after the engagement had lasted three hours, the farm of La Haye-

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Sainte, in spite of the desperate resistance of the Scotch regiments, was occupied by the French infantry ; while the fifth and sixth English divisions were nearly cut in pieces, their general, Picton, remaining dead on the field. During the combat, the Emperor rode through the line of infantry of the first corps, the line of cavalry of Milhaud's cuirassiers, and that of the Guard in the third line, in the midst of the discharges of the adversary's artillery and musquetry. The brave General Devaux, commanding the artillery of the Guard, was killed at his side by a cannon-ball. He was succeeded by General Lallemande, who was also wounded shortly after.

Disorder began to prevail in the English army : the baggage, waggon-train, and wounded, seeing the enemy approach the high-road to Brussels and their principal opening through the forest, hastened to effect their retreat, as did most of the English, Belgians, and Germans who had been sabred by the cavalry. It was now four o'clock. The Emperor about this time received a most disagreeable piece of news from Gembloux that Marshal Grouchy had not quitted his camp there at ten o'clock, owing, it was said, to the badness of the weather. Strange and most pernicious infatuation ?¹ The cannonade between General Bulow and Count Lobau had now commenced and was maintained for an hour, when the French general perceiving that the centre of the Prussians, which was foremost, was not well supported, marched to the spot, pierced through, and repulsed it ; but the two wings, which had been retarded by the roads, then came forward and endeavoured to out-flank the 6th corps. Count Lobau, fearful of being turned, fell back. The fire of the Prussians now doubled : the balls fell on the causeway in front and in rear of La Belle-Alliance, where the Emperor was standing with his Guard. At this critical moment, he ordered General Duhesme, who commanded the Young Guard, to wheel to the right of the 6th corps with his two brigades of infantry and twenty-four pieces of cannon. A quarter of an hour afterwards, that formidable battery opened its fire ; and soon acquired the superiority. As soon as the Young Guard was engaged, the movement of the Prussians appeared to be checked : but still they continued to attempt out-flanking the French right. Lieutenant-General Morand then moved with four battalions of the Old Guard and sixteen pieces of cannon, to the right of the Young Guard : two regiments of the Old Guard took post in front of Planchenoit : the Prussian line being out-flanked, General Bulow was repulsed ; his left made a

¹ I do not attribute deliberate treachery to Marshal Grouchy ; but I believe that the vanity of the French was so excited and tortured at this period lest they should not take the most *knowing* side of the question, that they fairly lost their senses and their self-possession altogether.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

movement backwards, converged, and by degrees all his line fell back. The French advanced, and occupied the positions from which General Bulow retreated. The Prussian bullets no longer reached the causeway of Charleroi, nor did they even come near the spot previously occupied by Count Lobau : this was at seven o'clock.

Two hours had elapsed since Count d'Erlon had taken possession of La Haye, had outflanked the English left and General Bulow's right. The light cavalry of the 1st corps, pursuing the infantry on the flats of La Haye, had been brought back by a body of cavalry superior in weight and number. Count Milhaud now ascended the height with his cuirassiers, giving warning to General Lefebvre Desnouettes, who immediately commenced a hot fire to sustain him. This happened at five o'clock, at the moment when Bulow's attack had been most menacing. The English cavalry was repulsed by the cuirassiers and the chasseurs of the Guard. The whole field of battle between La Haye-Sainte and Mont St. Jean, occupied by the English left, was abandoned. On seeing these brilliant charges, cries of victory were heard all over the field, upon which the Emperor said, 'It is an hour too soon; but we must follow up what is done.' He then sent an order to the cuirassiers of Kellermann, which were still stationary on the left, to move quickly to the support of the cavalry on the low grounds. This rapid movement of three thousand cuirassiers who advanced under the cannonade of the Prussians, shouting '*Vive l'Empereur!*' had an animating effect, though it ought in strictness to have been delayed a little longer. The cavalry marched as in pursuit of the English army, while Bulow still pressed upon the flank and rear. The soldiers and officers sought to divine in the looks of the Chief (which breathed nothing but confidence) whether they were conquerors or in danger.¹ Just at this time, the division of heavy cavalry of the guard, under the orders of General Guyot, and which was behind Kellermann's cuirassiers, followed at a brisk trot to the plain. On perceiving this movement, the Emperor sent Count Bertrand to recall it, for it was his reserve; but they were already in action before the order arrived. Thus did the Emperor find himself deprived of his reserve of cavalry ever since five o'clock; of that reserve which properly employed had so often given him the victory: while these twelve thousand select horse performed prodigies of valour; overthrew the more numerous cavalry opposed to them; broke through many squares of infantry, disordered their ranks, took possession of sixty pieces of cannon, and seized six stand of colours. These trophies

¹ This is a distinctive trait between the French and English. The latter would not look to see what would be the event in such circumstances, but would determine to produce it themselves or fall in the attempt.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

were presented to the Emperor by three chasseurs of the guard and three cuirassiers. The English commander believed the battle lost a second time; and must have felt considerable uneasiness at the perilous situation in which he had chosen to place himself. Ponsonby's brigade, charged by the red-lancers of the Guard, was broken through, and its general killed by several lance-wounds. The Prince of Orange was severely wounded, and on the point of being taken: but in spite of all these advantages the French cavalry not being supported by the strong body of infantry, which was still engaged with Bulow, could do no more than keep its ground, till about seven o'clock; when Bulow having been repulsed and the cavalry still maintaining itself on the flat, whence its adversaries were driven, the victory might be said to be gained. Joy was in every countenance, and hope in every heart. This sentiment was the more powerful from succeeding the apprehensions which had been felt during the flank attack of a whole army, and that had endangered their retreat for above an hour. At this moment a cannonade was distinctly heard; it came in the direction of Wavres; it was Blucher, and not Grouchy.

The latter between twelve and one o'clock was half-way between Gembloux and Wavres, where he heard the terrible cannonade of Waterloo and must know that two great armies were engaged. General Excelmans came up and addressing the Marshal said, 'The Emperor is in action with the English army; there can be no doubt of it; a fire so terrible cannot be a skirmish. We ought to march to the scene of action. I am an old soldier of the army of Italy, and have heard General Buonaparte promulgate this principle a hundred times. If we turn to the left, we shall be on the field of battle in two hours.' He hesitated, but pleaded his orders to follow Blucher, which he ought to have done the preceding day, and though he did not now know where he was. Count Gerard joined them and urged the same advice. Still nothing could move him; he remained as if spell-bound. The very fear of what might happen, the magnitude of the evil took away the power to avert it. He saw the sun shining above his head, that was no more to behold his country's independence or the face of freedom; he saw the triumphs, the struggles, the sacrifices of the last five-and-twenty years about to be annulled and made of no account, which it required but one more effort to sanction and confirm forever; the blood that had flowed turned into laughter and scorn; an imbecil monarch forced back on an hereditary throne, like some foul Eastern idol, borne in defiance over the bleeding bodies and the prostrate necks of an abused people; liberty bound hand-and-foot, afraid to breathe or move, its name henceforth to become a reproach, reviled, suspected, hunted down, and trod into the earth under the hoofs of kings: he

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

saw this done by an English general, vaunting the rights, the glory, and the generosity of his own country ; he saw the greatest reputation in modern times about to become a prey to the most shallow and worthless ;—

‘ Saw where an eagle in his pride of place
Was by a mousing owl hawk’d at and kill’d—’

he saw or should have seen all this, and could not be prevailed upon to stir a step to prevent it. The very weight and damning sense of consequences which should cut short all hesitation and compunction, seems in minds not strong enough to cope with it, to seek relief in idle forms or in some hollow subterfuge. At one moment Marshal Grouchy appeared convinced ; but just then a report came that the Prussians were at Wavres, and he set out once more after them. It was a rear-guard which Blucher had left there : he himself had gone (where he was much wanted) to Waterloo. Marshal Grouchy found at Wavres the officer who had been dispatched from the field of battle at ten o’clock in the morning, and sent General Pajol with twelve thousand men to Limate, a bridge over the Dyle, about a league behind St. Lambert, where they arrived at seven in the evening.

Blucher had passed the night of the 17th at Wavres, with all his troops. Informed that the Duke of Wellington had decided to receive battle in front of the forest of Soignes, if he could reckon on his co-operation, the Prussian General had in the morning detached his fourth corps, which remained in line (not having been in the action at Ligny) on St. Lambert. Hearing no tidings of Grouchy, he concluded the whole French army was together : he therefore put his second corps, eighteen thousand strong, in motion, and marched himself with the first corps, reduced to thirteen thousand, towards Mont St. Jean, leaving Thielman with the third at Wavres. On his way at six o’clock, he learnt that Grouchy had arrived before Wavres ; but it was too late to turn back, nor was he so disposed. In his mind (at least) the greater object outweighed the less. If Napoleon was victorious, Grouchy was of little consequence : if Napoleon was beaten, Grouchy was of still less. Blucher kept his face turned towards Waterloo : he did not shrink from, but was attracted to the spot where the struggle was ; for ‘ strength with strength doth sympathise.’ His march was slow, the men being greatly fatigued, and the roads broken up and full of defiles. His two columns, thirty-one thousand strong, opened the communication between Bulow and the English. The former, who was retreating, halted : Wellington, who had been in a state of stupor, and had seen nothing before him but a disgraceful defeat, now saw his escape. By Blucher’s arrival, the allied army was increased to one

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

hundred and fifty thousand men, a proportion of more than two to one.

Meanwhile, the cavalry in the plain, whence it commanded a view of the field of battle, observing the movement of General Bulow, but confiding in the reserves of the Guard, which it saw ready to keep that General in check, entertained (up to this period) no alarm; and even loudly cheered when it saw him driven back, waiting the arrival of the infantry of the Guard to decide the victory: but it felt the greatest astonishment on perceiving the numerous columns of Blucher arrive. Some regiments fell back; the Emperor noticed this; and as it was of the utmost importance to restore firmness to the cavalry, he put himself at the head of four battalions of the infantry of the Guard, and advanced on the left, in front of La Haye-Sainte, sending aide-de-camps along the whole line, to announce the arrival of succours and to say that a little patience would decide the victory. General Reille's corps was prepared to attack in front of the castle of Hougoumont. The Emperor seeing the cavalry disconcerted, and that a reserve of infantry was necessary to support it, ordered General Friant to march with the four battalions of the middle Guard (the others not having come up) to meet the threatened onset. These four battalions repulsed all whom they met, at the same time that charges of cavalry bore down the English ranks. In ten minutes the other battalions of the Guard arrived; the Emperor ranged them by brigades, two battalions in line and two in columns. The sun was set: General Friant, being wounded, passed by at this moment; he said that all went on well, that the enemy appeared to form a rear-guard to support his retreat; but that he would be entirely broken as soon as the rest of the Guard attacked him. For this a quarter of an hour was necessary. It was at this juncture that Blucher arrived at La Haye, and overthrew the corps which defended it: it fled with precipitation. Though attacked by quadruple its number, it might by a little more perseverance and by taking advantage of the houses and the night have prevented Marshal Blucher from forcing his way through the village. It was here that the cry of *Sauve qui peut* is said to have been first heard. As it was, the opening being made and the line once broken, the Prussian cavalry inundated the plain. Bulow marched forward again—Count Lobau fell back unwillingly. The crowd became so great that it was necessary to charge the front of the Guard with its left on La Haye-Sainte and its right on La Belle-Alliance, facing the Prussians, on whom an attack was then to be made. At this crisis the brigade of two thousand English cavalry from Ohain marched forward and penetrated between General Reille and the Guard. The disorder became dreadful throughout the field; the Emperor having only time to put himself

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

under the protection of one of the squares of the Guard. He now missed his reserve, which had hastily engaged at the close of the afternoon. General Bulow pushed on to his left, outflanking the field of battle. Had it been daylight, so that the troops could have seen the Emperor, they might have been rallied; but nothing could be done in the obscurity of the night. The Guard retreated; the fire of their opponents was within eight yards of the French army; and the causeways cut off. The Emperor with his staff lingered a long time on a small elevation with the regiments of the Guard. Four pieces of cannon planted there kept up a brisk fire on the plain: the last discharge wounded Lord Uxbridge, who commanded the English cavalry. There was no longer any time to lose; the Emperor could only retreat through the fields, where cavalry, infantry, artillery were all confusedly mingled together. The staff gained the little town of Gemappes, where it was intended to rally a rear-guard; but the disorder was irremediable. It was now eleven o'clock: and the Emperor's only hope rested with Girard's division, which had been left at Ligny, and to which he had sent an order to march on Quatre-Bras to support the retreat.

Thus was lost the battle of Waterloo, the greatest and most fatal in its consequences that ever was fought in the world. It was lost in spite of every possible effort and combination of genius to win it, because all the skill and force Napoleon was master of was unable to overcome the obstinacy and courage of the British soldiers before the arrival of an overwhelming superiority of numbers, which it had been the object of all the French general's endeavours to disunite, and in which he had so far and would still have succeeded, had it not been for the unaccountable absence of Grouchy both from Waterloo and Wavres, at one or other of which places it is certain he ought to have been. The English soldiers stood the brunt of the battle the whole day (though with dreadful havoc) by their own inherent stubbornness of character and daring resistance to the enemy; the Prussians by an inroad of fresh troops (when all was supposed to be nearly over) gained the victory, of which the English general has received the credit ever since. He had the merit of standing by and leaving the issue very wisely to his men. The loss of the English in this battle was eleven thousand three hundred men, the Hanoverians three thousand five hundred, the Belgians eight thousand, the Prussians in the four days' fighting thirty-eight thousand, in all sixty thousand troops. The French loss in the different battles and during the rout was forty thousand.

The French soldiers never showed more courage, cheerfulness, nor enthusiasm than in this campaign. Their confidence in the Emperor was unabated; but they were suspicious and distrustful of their other chiefs. The treasons of 1814 were always present to their minds;

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and every movement which they did not comprehend created inquietude. When the first shots were fired at St. Amand, an old corporal approached the Emperor, and said to him, 'Sire, distrust Marshal Soult, be assured that he betrays us.' 'Be tranquil,' replied the Emperor, 'I answer for him as for myself.' Towards the middle of the engagement, an officer reported to Marshal Soult that General Vandamme had gone over to the enemy. When the battle was nearly over, a dragoon, his sabre covered with blood, rode up, crying, 'Sire, come quickly to our division, General d'Henin harangues the soldiery to go over to the enemy.'—'Have you heard him?'—'No, Sire, but an officer who seeks your Majesty has seen him, and charged me to tell it you.' While this was passing, General d'Henin received a cannon's shot, which carried away one of his thighs. On the 14th, at night, Lieutenant-General Bourmont, Colonel Clouet, and the staff-officer Viloutrey deserted to the enemy. Some officers, who were the bearers of dispatches, are also supposed to have disappeared. But not a single soldier deserted his station; while many who were wounded, killed themselves on the field of battle, when they learnt that the army was routed. Lieutenant-General Duhesme and Count Lobau were taken prisoners: General Cambrone of the Guard remained severely wounded on the field of battle. Of twenty-four English Generals, twelve were killed or dangerously wounded. General Duhesme, although a prisoner, was assassinated on the 19th by a Brunswick hussar; a crime that remained unpunished and unnoticed. He was a brave and excellent officer, firm and unshaken in good as well as in bad fortune.

Grouchy attacked and beat General Thielman at Wavres at six o'clock on the evening of the 18th. Count Gerard was wounded. General Pajol with his twelve thousand men repulsed Bulow's rear-guard, and passed the Dyle; but owing to the darkness, could not continue his march. The next day, General Thielman attacked Marshal Grouchy, and was repulsed by him. The latter gave directions to pursue the enemy towards Brussels, when he received the news of the loss of the battle of Mont St. Jean and the Emperor's order to retreat on Namur. He did so, the Prussians following him. He arrived at Laon on the 26th with thirty-two thousand men. The first Prussian troops arrived about eleven in the night of the 18th, at the heights above Gemappes: they soon overpowered a handful of French soldiers, whom General Duhesme had collected, and entered the town. Among other equipages, they found the travelling carriage of the Emperor, which was usually brought into the field behind him, and was so fitted up as to contain a dressing-case, a change of clothes, a sword, cloak, and an iron bedstead.¹ Napoleon arrived at Quatre-Bras about one

¹ This carriage was afterwards shewn in London.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

o'clock ; dismounted at a bivouac ; and dispatched several officers to Marshal Grouchy to return. Girard's division left at Ligny was not to be found. Count Lobau rallied some hundreds of horse, and put himself at their head as a rear-guard ; but was soon after made a prisoner. The Emperor then directed his course to Charleroi, where he found that a great number of cavalry had already crossed the Sambre ; he thence proceeded to Philippeville, and arrived at Laon on the 20th at four in the afternoon. Here he received dispatches from Prince Jerome, stating that he had rallied twenty-five thousand men at Avesne ; that the army augmented every hour, that most of the generals were arrived, and that the loss was not so great as it was thought to be, more than half of the guns and stores of artillery being saved. Marshal Soult was ordered to fix himself at Laon, to complete the fortifications and secure supplies of provisions for an army of eighty or ninety thousand men, which would be united in a few days before that town. The Emperor imagining that the enemy's generals, profiting of their victory, would push on to the Somme, required Prince Jerome to bring the army from Avesne on the 22nd and give Grouchy and Count Rapp (with the fifth corps, twenty-thousand men) the rendezvous under the walls of Laon. His presence with the army not being wanted for a few days, he determined to make use of this interval to go to Paris ; but he meant to return to Laon on the 25th. Never ! He must know this himself, unless he resolved to resort to measures of violence, which (unfortunately) were equally contrary to his nature, his habits, and his principles. Paris was the heart of France ; and it was the heart of a woman. To pluck out this heart and put a man's heart into it, it would be necessary to unsheath the bloody falchion of civil discord, and renew the terrors of the Revolution. But he had hitherto marched in military forms, had strode in Imperial pomp ; and if he had attempted to change his character, he would have faltered half-way and only sunk from his dignity without producing the wished-for effect. Otherwise, well would it have been to have given up everything sooner than the cause ; and to let tyrants see that after having made torrents of blood flow without remorse or pity for five-and-twenty years to gain their object, their opponents had at least equal spirit and obduracy to shed what was left of theirs, and to turn the stalls of slavery (into which they were driven like cattle) into a slaughter-house ! The Chambers (half-traitors, half-cowards) would be against him ; and without the Chambers, he could only save France by making examples and by a great convulsion. It cost him a world of agony to decide ; but he at length determined to give up the attempt, doubtful and desperate as it was, not so much because the end did not justify the means, as from a want of *keeping* and decorum in his becoming the instrument of it. He yielded to the clamour that it was better to

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

sacrifice one man than a whole nation :—as if the Allies cared any thing about him but from the aid he lent to France, and to a cause which they hated. If they feared one man more than a whole nation, surely he could not be reckoned as an ordinary man.

Napoleon returned to Paris on the 21st. The hubbub was complete. His presence did not lessen it. It was proposed that he should immediately go to the Chambers without changing his dress and covered with dust just as he arrived from the field of battle, and that this might have some effect ; but the design was laid aside, as from the temper they were in, some personal risk was apprehended. Fouché who was in correspondence with Metternich and the Royalists ran about from one party to another, fomenting the mischief, saying to the Constitutionalists, ‘ He is come back desperate, we cannot submit to the restoration of tyranny,’ and then seeking out the Buonapartists and persuading them that unless they took prompt and decisive steps, the Chambers would depose the Emperor and invite the Allies in. In the height of the fermentation, the Legislative Body declared itself permanent ; and the Abdication was tendered to Buonaparte which he signed the 22nd in favour of his son. By this act he became a private individual. The Duke of Wellington and Blucher no sooner heard of it than they marched upon Paris (knowing there was no longer any obstacle between them and their prey) which they entered on the 28th, bringing Louis with them, that lover of peace and liberty, who ascended his throne a second time by the help of foreign bayonets and in virtue of divine right, and who had no sooner done so than he dissolved the two Chambers, thus putting an end at once to all their fine-spun schemes of legislation and government. As to those of them who wished either openly or secretly for the return of the Bourbons, I have nothing to say ; they are not people to be reasoned with ; but those who thought they had any alternative but between Buonaparte and the Bourbons, were little short of mad. They might have been deceived the first time : but he who is twice a dupe, is more than half a hypocrite. The Provisional Government, composed of men like Fayette and B. Constant,¹ demanding when disarmed and as a free gift from the Allies the recognition of their right to choose their own government, which they had been fighting twenty-five years to deprive them of, and receiving as the only answer ‘ Your King is at hand ! ’—from one whose own government existed by having sent *their* king into

¹ Fouché, who had wriggled himself into this government, was observed always to stand close by the side of the Duke of Wellington at these burlesque conferences, from whence he went to escort Buonaparte to the seaside and never quitted him ; but *dodged* him the whole way (like a malicious baboon) till he had seen him safe in the hands of his enemies.

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

exile, presents a picture of folly and effrontery together which has no parallel but itself.

On the evening of Napoleon's return to Paris, he sent for M. Benjamin Constant to come to him at the Elysée about seven o'clock. The Chambers had decreed their permanence (*pro tempore*) and the proposal for the Abdication had reached the Emperor. He was serious, but calm. In reply to some words dropped on the disaster at Waterloo, he said, 'The question no longer concerns me, but France. They wish me to abdicate. Have they calculated upon the inevitable consequences of this abdication? It is round me, round my name, that the army rallies: to separate me from it, is to disband it. If I abdicate to-day, in two days' time you will no longer have an army. These poor fellows do not understand all your subtleties. Is it believed that axioms in metaphysics, declarations of right, harangues from the tribune will put a stop to the disbanding of an army? To reject me at present is what I do not understand. It is not when the enemy is at twenty-five leagues' distance that a government can be overturned with impunity. Does any one imagine that the foreign powers will be won over by fine words? If they had dethroned me fifteen days ago, there would have been some spirit in it: but as it is, I make part of what strangers attack, I make part then of what France is bound to defend. In giving me up, she gives up herself, she avows her weakness, she acknowledges herself conquered, she courts the insolence of the conqueror. It is not the love of liberty which deposes me, but Waterloo; it is fear, and a fear of which your enemies will take advantage. And then what title has the Chamber to demand my abdication? It goes out of its lawful sphere in doing so; it has no authority. It is my right, my duty to dissolve it.'

He then hastily ran over the possible consequences of such a step. Separated from the Chambers, he could only be considered as a military chief: but the army would be for him; that would always join him who can lead it against foreign banners, and to this might be added all that part of the population which is equally powerful and easily led in such a state of things. As if chance intended to strengthen Napoleon in this train of thought, while he was speaking, the avenue of Marigny resounded with the cries of *Vive l'Empereur!* A crowd of men, chiefly of the poor and labouring class, pressed forward into the avenue, full of a wild enthusiasm, and trying to scale the walls to make an offer to Napoleon to rally round and defend him. Buonaparte for some time looked attentively at this group. 'You see it is so,' said he: 'those are not the men I have loaded with honours and riches. What do these people owe me? I found them, I left them poor. The instinct of necessity enlightens them; the voice of the country speaks by their

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

mouths; and if I chuse, if I permit it, in an hour the refractory Chambers will have ceased to exist. But the life of a man is not worth purchasing at such a price: I did not return from the isle of Elba that Paris should be inundated with blood.'—He did not like the idea of flight. 'Why should I not stay here?' he repeated. 'What do you suppose they would do to a man disarmed like me? I will go to Malmaison: I can live there retired with some friends, who most certainly will come to see me only for my own sake.' And then he described with complacency and even with a sort of gaiety this new kind of life. Then, discarding an idea which sounded like mere irony, he went on:—'If they do not like me to remain in France, where am I to go? To England? My abode there would be ridiculous or disquieting. I should be tranquil; no one would believe it. Every fog would be suspected of landing me on the coast. At the first sight of a green coat getting out of a boat, one party would fly from France, the other would put France out of the pale of the law. I should compromise every body, and by dint of repeating, 'Behold he comes,' I should feel the temptation to set out! America would be more suitable; I could live there with dignity. But once more, what is there to fear? What sovereign can, without injuring himself, persecute me? To one I have restored half his dominions; how often has the other pressed my hand, calling me a *Great Man*! And as to the third, can he find pleasure or honour in the humiliation of his son-in-law? Would they wish to proclaim in the face of the world that all they did was through fear? As to the rest, I shall see: I do not wish to employ open force. I came in the hope of combining our last resources: they abandon me; they do so with the same facility with which they received me back. Well then, let them efface, if possible, this double stain of weakness and levity! Let them cover it over with some sacrifice, with some glory! Let them do for the country what they will not do for me. I doubt it. To-day those who deliver up Buonaparte, say that it is to save France: to-morrow, by delivering up France, they will prove that it was to save their own heads.'

Such was the conversation and tone of mind of a man who but three evenings before had lost the battle of Waterloo! If it shows greatness to attain the empire of the world, it shows still more to resign it with equanimity. The day following he abdicated. From that time his abode in Paris became uneasy, the groups and acclamations round the palace of the Elysée still continuing and exciting various apprehensions, according to men's wishes. On the 25th, Napoleon quitted the Elysée for Malmaison. The Legislature proclaimed Napoleon II. on the 27th. During the 28th, the agitation and uncertainty of the capital continued, it being the general opinion that Fouché betrayed the

BATTLE OF WATERLOO

national cause, and all true patriots wishing that Napoleon would that very night rejoin the army and repel the invaders from the soil. Fouché began to watch and lay trains for his late master ; and sent a letter to the Duke of Eckmuhl, pressing his departure for the isle of Aix. When on the point of setting out, he sent a message to the Provisional Government, offering to take the command of the army, which met with the reception that might be expected. This was a weakness. He then set out with a part of his suite to Rochefort by way of Tours ; the others proceeded through Orleans and Saintes. Here Las Cases's party were reviled and insulted by some ladies of the fashionable circle of the place ; while the females of the lower classes bathed their hands in tears. This sufficiently pointed out which class profited by the two systems of government. Buonaparte arrived at Rochefort on the 3rd of July, and left it on the 15th, to go on board the Bellerophon. He here saw his brother Joseph for the last time. An offer had been made (perhaps an insidious one) by the captain of a Danish vessel to take him out of the harbour in disguise and proceed to America. The two French frigates that had been singled out by the Minister of Marine for that purpose were not strong enough to force their way by the English man-of-war, and would not be suffered to pass unquestioned. Captain Maitland, the commander of the Bellerophon, could give no answer to the question whether the English government would consider Buonaparte as a prisoner of war : but said, if he wished it, his instructions were to convey him to England, and that he had no doubt he would be well treated there. Count Lallemand, who was proscribed by the old French government, was particularly anxious to know whether persons in his situation would be delivered up on landing in England. This inquiry was answered in the negative, and the doubt was almost considered as an insult. It is an insult to doubt English honour and generosity : to believe it is a jest.—Seeing no alternative in these circumstances but either to renew the war by joining General Lamarque in La Vendée or General Clausel at Bourdeaux, or to surrender himself up to the English ; Napoleon determined on the latter. Fouché, who accompanied him from the Provisional Government, was also becoming importunate. Having made up his mind on the subject, he dictated the well-known letter to the Prince-Regent, announcing his intention and the motives of it, which General Gourgaud was commissioned to deliver in person, and a sloop of war immediately set out with him for that purpose. It was expressed as follows :—

‘ Royal Highness,

‘ Exposed to the factions which divide my country, and to the hostility of the greatest powers of Europe, I have closed my political

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

career. I come like Themistocles to seek the hospitality of the English nation. I place myself under the protection of their laws, which I claim from your Royal Highness as the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.

(Signed) 'NAPOLEON.'

This letter received no answer : nor in my opinion did it deserve one. Buonaparte had nothing in common with Themistocles, with the Prince-Regent, nor with the British people. As to their generosity, they have no doubt a disposition that way from constitutional courage ; but though they mean well, they are so prone to think ill of others that they are at the mercy of every sinister report, and the goodness of their intentions is warped and poisoned by their prejudices and suspicions. On the 15th at daylight the French brig, *Epervier*, weighed anchor and proceeded towards the *Bellerophon*, having a flag of truce flying. Both wind and tide being contrary, Captain Maitland sent out his barge to meet her. Seeing the boats return, the captain was extremely anxious to discover with his spying-glass whether Napoleon was on board, a report having already been set about that he had escaped : at length the matter was placed beyond farther doubt as the Emperor came alongside with his suite. Count Las Cases, who had volunteered to accompany him in his exile, stood at the gangway to present Captain Maitland, to whom he said, ' I come on board your ship to claim the protection of the English laws.' The captain then led him to his cabin, of which he was put in immediate possession. All the officers of the *Bellerophon* were presented to the Emperor soon after : this ceremony being over, he came out of his cabin and visited every part of the ship during the morning.

CHAPTER LVII

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

TOWARDS four o'clock, the *Superb*, and English seventy-four gun-ship, bearing the flag of Rear-Admiral Hotham, who commanded on the station, anchored close to the *Bellerophon*. The Admiral came to visit the Emperor and remained to dinner. In consequence of the questions asked by Napoleon concerning his ship, he expressed a wish to know whether his Majesty would go on board the following day ; upon which the Emperor said he had no objection ; and would there-

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

fore breakfast with the Admiral, accompanied by his suite. Accordingly, the next morning, the Emperor went on board the *Superb*. All the honours were liberally done, except those of firing cannon : every object was examined with the most minute attention. Admiral Hotham throughout evinced the refinement and grace belonging to a man of rank and breeding. On the return of the party to the *Bellerophon*, she got under weigh and set sail for England. This event took place on the 16th of July, a fortnight after their departure from Paris.

On leaving the *Bellerophon* in the morning to go on board the *Superb*, the Emperor stopped short in front of the Guard drawn up on the quarter-deck to receive him. He made them perform several manœuvres, giving the word of command himself. Having desired them to charge bayonets, and perceiving that this was not done altogether in the French manner, he advanced into the midst of the soldiers, put the weapons aside with his hands, and seizing a musquet from one of the rear-rank, went through the exercise himself, according to the French method. A sudden movement and change of countenance among those who were present, sufficiently testified their astonishment at seeing the Emperor thus carelessly place himself amidst English bayonets. On returning from the *Superb*, his attendants were indirectly questioned on the subject, and asked whether the Emperor had ever acted in the same way with his own soldiers, while the greatest surprise was expressed at his confidence. Not one of the officers had any notion of sovereigns who could thus explain and execute their own commands ; and it was easy to perceive they had no just conception of the person now before them, notwithstanding his having been so marked an object of attention for the last twenty years. The English, to indulge their own blind, headstrong prejudices, and serve the purposes of others, create a *bugbear* of the imagination ; and when they come in contact with the reality, can hardly believe their senses, because it is not like !

The Emperor, however, had not been long amongst his most inveterate enemies, without exercising the influence of his real character and genius over them. The captain, officers, and crew adopted the etiquette of his suite, showing him exactly the same attention and respect : the Captain addressed him by his usual title : when he appeared on deck, every one took off his hat and remained uncovered while he staid—this was not the case at first. There was no entering his cabin, except by passing his attendants : no persons but those who were invited appeared at his table. Napoleon was in fact treated as an Emperor on board the *Bellerophon*. He often appeared on deck, conversing either with some of his suite or with the officers

of the ship. Of all those who had followed Napoleon, Count Las Cases was the one who was least known to him. He now, however, frequently addressed him; and their intercourse became daily more friendly and familiar. The Count was able to make himself of use to the Emperor from his knowledge of the English language, which enabled him to act as interpreter; from his having been in the navy, so that he could explain what related to the manœuvres of the ship and the state of the weather; and he had also passed ten years in England, by which means he could furnish considerable information as to the laws, manners, and customs of the people. The first service that Las Cases rendered the Emperor was to draw up a summary under his dictation of their situation at Rochefort, and of the motives which induced him to throw himself on the faith and hospitality of England. This step was at least so far voluntary that he had at the time other resources and chances still left (however desperate)—and which assuredly he would have tried, had he known the treatment that was in reserve for him.

On the 23rd they saw Ushant at four in the morning, having passed it in the night. From the moment of approaching the Channel, ships of the line and frigates were seen sailing in various directions. The coast of England was discovered towards evening. The vessel anchored in Torbay about eight the next morning (the 24th). The Emperor had risen at six, and went on the poop, whence he surveyed the coast and anchorage. Captain Maitland immediately dispatched a messenger to Lord Keith, the commander-in-chief at Plymouth. General Gourgaud rejoined the Emperor. He had been obliged to deliver up the letter with which he was charged for the Prince-Regent, and had not only been refused permission to land, but prohibited from all communication. This was a bad omen, and the first indication of the numberless tribulations that followed. It was nothing short of madness to expect anything else. No sooner had it transpired that the Emperor was on board the *Bellerophon*, than the bay was covered with vessels and boats full of people. The owner of a beautiful country-seat in sight of the ship sent a present of a quantity of fruit. The concourse of boats and crowds of spectators continued without intermission. The Emperor saw them from the cabin-windows, and occasionally showed himself on deck. The French here received some letters from their friends. From the length of the passage, the French papers had had time to transmit an account of every particular that had happened, so that whatever related to Napoleon and his suite was already known in England, where they had been expected for some days before.

Orders arrived in the night of the 25th for the ship to repair immediately to Plymouth: they reached their new destination at

• DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

four o'clock in the afternoon, ten days after their departure from Rochefort, twenty-seven after quitting Paris, and thirty-five from the Emperor's Abdication. From this day forward, things looked worse. Armed boats rowed round the ship : those whom curiosity had attracted were driven away by threats or force. Lord Keith, who was in the bay, did not come on board. Two frigates stood out from the roadstead and anchored on each side of the Belle-rophon. Every visage seemed now turned towards the French with a sullen distrust : the most sinister rumours had reached the ship : several destinations were mentioned—imprisonment in the Tower was the least frightful, and some spoke of St. Helena. This sudden ill-news threw the French into all the agonies of despair ; and Las Cases declares that it turned his hair grey ! The Emperor continued to appear on deck as usual. The different reports had reached him ; but he disbelieved or seemed to disbelieve them. He still trusted to the generosity of the English character. As an additional proof of this generosity (if any were wanting) the virulence of the English newspapers was let loose upon the victims of our bad faith at the moment when they were in our power : and all kinds of horrors, falsehoods, and imprecations were accumulated on their heads, to reconcile the public mind to the measures of violence and meanness about to be perpetrated towards them. The character of English generosity is not sufficiently understood. It only begins to operate when all power of resistance on the part of an enemy ceases, with every pretext for vengeance or alarm ; and a lurking malignity descends even into the tomb, so loth are we to quit the shadow of that which excited our hatred and our dread—the only passions of which we are ordinarily susceptible ! None can escape the influence of slander, constantly repeated ; and as was designed, the demeanour of those around the French Emperor and his followers became less easy, their politeness appeared constrained, and their countenances more misgiving.

Lord Keith, after announcing himself for some time before, had only just made his appearance. The papers gave an account of the measures in contemplation ; but nothing official appeared, and this kept the captives in a state of uncertainty and suspense, the most painful of all others. Meanwhile, their arrival in England had produced a singular sensation : the presence of the Emperor excited a curiosity bordering on delirium. All England seemed hurrying towards Plymouth. People were stopped on the road for want of post-horses and accommodation. The Sound was covered with an immense number of boats, for which enormous prices were given. The Emperor, to whom the statements in the newspapers were read, betrayed no decrease of composure either by his conversation or general habits. It was known

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

that he always appeared on deck towards five in the afternoon. A short time before this hour, all the boats collected alongside of each other: there were thousands: and so close together, that the water could no longer be seen for them. The people looked more like a multitude collected in a public square than any thing else. When the Emperor came out, the noise and gestures of so many people had a most striking effect. It was evident, however, that nothing hostile was meant; and that if curiosity had brought them, they felt interested on going away. At first, the spectators merely looked towards the ship, they ended by saluting; some remained uncovered and occasionally went so far as to cheer. Several persons of both sexes came decorated with red carnations—a circumstance of which the newspapers took advantage to pour out fresh abuse and instigate farther severities.

A report had been in circulation for two days, that an under-secretary of state was coming from London officially to notify the final resolution of the English Ministers with respect to the Emperor. Accordingly (on the 30th) the messenger appeared: it was Sir Charles Bunbury. He came on board, accompanied by Lord Keith, and delivered a dispatch, authorising the removal of the Emperor to St. Helena, and limiting the number of persons who were to accompany him to three, excluding, however, the Duke of Rovigo and General Lallemand, included in the list of those proscribed by the Bourbons. The bearers of this sentence spoke and understood French: they were admitted alone. Napoleon protested with firmness and warmth against the violation about to be exercised on his person. The following is the form, in which the notification was conveyed:—

‘Communication made by Lord Keith, in the name of the English Ministers.’

‘As it may, perhaps, be convenient for General Buonaparte to learn, without farther delay, the intentions of the British Government with regard to him, your Lordship will communicate the following information.

‘It would be inconsistent with our duty towards our country and the Allies of his Majesty, if General Buonaparte possessed the means of again disturbing the repose of Europe. It is on this account that it becomes absolutely necessary he should be restrained in his personal liberty, so far as this is required by the foregoing important object.

‘The island of St. Helena has been chosen as his future residence; its climate is healthy; and its local position will allow of his being treated with more indulgence than could be admitted in any other spot, owing to indispensable precautions which it would be necessary to employ for the security of his person.

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

‘ General Buonaparte is allowed to select amongst those persons who accompanied him to England (with the exception of General Savary and Lallemand) three officers, who, together with his surgeon, will have permission to accompany him to St. Helena : these individuals will not be allowed to quit the island without the sanction of the British Government.

‘ Rear-Admiral Sir George Cockburn, who is named Commander-in-Chief at the Cape of Good Hope and seas adjacent, will convey General Buonaparte and his suite to St. Helena ; and he will receive detailed instructions relative to the execution of this service.

‘ Sir G. Cockburn will, most probably, be ready to sail in a few days ; for which reason it is desirable that General Buonaparte should make choice of the persons who are to accompany him without delay.’

Although this sentence had been expected, it deeply affected most of those whom it concerned. The Emperor did not however fail to appear on deck as usual, with the same countenance as before ; and tranquilly surveyed the crowds which seemed more eager than ever to see him. The exclusion of Generals Savary and Lallemand was particularly afflicting ; and it sounded in the circumstances of the time like their death-warrant. The rest hoped that the Emperor’s choice might fall upon them ; entertaining no fear but that of being left behind. The Emperor had the papers read to him every day. Only two amongst them were favourable ; yet this gave some hope that the hatred inspired by an enemy would at length turn to more generous sentiments. The Grand-Marshal (Bertrand) and the Duke of Rovigo alone saw Napoleon habitually. Many of those who had followed his fortunes did not approach or speak to him more frequently than when he had been at the Thuilleries. He usually sent for Count Las Cases, when there were any letters or papers to translate ; and on the evening of the 1st of August, asked him if he would accompany him to St. Helena, to which the latter cheerfully assented. While they were talking on the subject, Madame Bertrand rushed into the cabin ; and in a frantic manner entreated the Emperor not to go to St. Helena, nor take her husband with him. But observing the astonishment and calmness of Napoleon, she ran back as precipitately as she had entered. In a moment after, loud cries were heard ; and on inquiry it was found that she had attempted to throw herself overboard, and was with difficulty prevented.

Count Las Cases was personally acquainted only with General and Madame Bertrand, whom he had known in Illyria, when he had been on a mission there. He had a prejudice against Savary, which soon vanished on a nearer acquaintance with him. He was sent for again by the Emperor, who made a number of inquiries concerning

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

St. Helena. 'But after all,' said he, 'am I quite sure of going there? Is a man dependent on others, when he wishes that his dependence should cease?' They continued to walk to and fro in the cabin: Napoleon seemed calm, though strongly affected, and somewhat absent. 'My friend,' he continued, 'I have sometimes an idea of quitting you, and this would not be very difficult: it is only necessary to give way to a little mental excitement, and I shall soon have escaped. All will be over; and you can then tranquilly rejoin your families. This is the more easy, since my internal convictions do not oppose any bar to it. I am one of those who conceive that the pains of the other world were only imagined to make up for the inadequate allurements which are offered to us there. God can never have willed such a contradiction to his infinite goodness, especially for an act of this kind; what is it after all, but wishing to return to him a little sooner?'¹ Las Cases remonstrated warmly against such notions: he urged the inconsistency of any rash step with the station the Emperor had held in the world, and said there was no knowing what future events might produce. 'Some of these suggestions have their weight,' said Napoleon; 'but what can we do in that desolate place?'—'Sire,' replied his attendant, 'we will live on the past: there is enough of it to satisfy us. Do we not enjoy the life of Cæsar and that of Alexander? We shall possess still more, you will re-peruse yourself, Sire!'—'Be it so!' rejoined Napoleon, 'we will write our Memoirs. Yes, we must be employed; for occupation is the scythe of time. A man ought to fulfil his destiny: this is my grand doctrine: let mine also be accomplished!' Resuming from this instant an air of ease and even gaiety, he passed on to subjects totally unconnected with his situation.²

Orders had arrived during the night of the 3rd for the *Bellerophon* to sail at an early hour. As she was too old for the voyage, and the Northumberland was known to be fitting out at Portsmouth or Chatham to convey them to St. Helena, this sudden removal and their proceeding up the Channel occasioned a variety of surmises among those on board. At this period Napoleon signed a protest against his

¹ The idea is to be found in Werter. 'And wouldst thou, O God! banish this child from thine awful presence?'

² The following is an order of the day issued by the First Consul to his Guard against suicide, dated 22 Floreal, year X.

'The grenadier Gobain has committed suicide from love; he was in other respects an excellent soldier. This is the second incident of the same nature that has occurred within a month. The First Consul directs it to be inserted in the order-book of the Guard:—That a soldier ought to know how to vanquish the pangs and melancholy of the passions; that there is as much true courage in bearing up against mental sufferings with constancy as in remaining firm on the wall of a battery. To give ourselves up to grief without resistance, or to kill ourselves to escape affliction, is to abandon the field of battle before the victory is gained.'

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

forcible detention, which was sent to Lord Keith. On leaving Plymouth-Sound the vessel stood to eastward ; but the sea was rough, and the wind blew contrary, and no progress was made during the day. In the evening, while conversing with Las Cases, the Emperor gave him in charge a girdle containing a diamond necklace of great value, which Hortense had forced him to accept on leaving Malmaison. This deposit the Count was enabled to return to him (when suddenly torn from Longwood) through the courage and fidelity of an Englishman—a perfect stranger to him. On the 6th they met the Northumberland, with two frigates full of troops, which were to compose the garrison of St. Helena. The three ships came to an anchor close by them ; the precautions lest any boats should approach were still continued. A report was now in circulation which cleared up the mystery of their so suddenly quitting Plymouth, which was, that a public officer had proceeded from London with a writ of *Habeas Corpus* to claim the person of the Emperor in the name of the law. This might probably allude to an attempt of the kind actually made at the time by Mr. Capel Lofft, an English constitutional lawyer and friend of liberty, but which proved abortive.

Admirals Keith and Cockburn came on board the *Bellerophon*, and communicated to the Emperor the instructions relative to his passage to and stay at St. Helena. According to these the money, valuables, arms, &c. belonging to the Emperor and his suite were to be taken from them, which was done shortly after. This measure occasioned great disgust and irritation. Constrained to limit his suite to three persons, Napoleon chose Bertrand, Montholon, and Las Cases. But Gourgaud, in despair at being left behind, made interest to be admitted as a fourth ; and Las Cases was considered as in a purely civil capacity. The Emperor addressed a new protest to Lord Keith, which Las Cases took on board the *Tonnant*, where the Admiral, a fine-looking old man, received him with great politeness ; but said he would give an answer in writing. This did not satisfy the envoy. He stated that Napoleon was unwell, having swelled legs ; he explained his repugnance to have his effects searched and tossed about, assuring the Admiral that he would prefer seeing them thrown into the sea : finally, he demanded whether those employed in the search would go so far as to deprive the Emperor of his sword. The Admiral replied that it would be respected ; but that Napoleon was the only person exempted, as all his followers would be disarmed. A secretary who was writing near them observed to Lord Keith aside that the order stated that Napoleon himself was to be disarmed—this was truly English : upon which the Admiral drily answered, ‘Mind your own business, Sir, and leave us to ourselves.’ This was also English. Admiral Cockburn, aided by an officer of the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

customs, went through the examination of the Emperor's effects : they seized four thousand Napoleons, leaving fifteen hundred for present use. No one but the valet-de-chambre, Marchand, attended during the examination. Meantime, the moment of quitting the Bellerophon arrived. The door of the cabin being opened, the Duke of Rovigo bursting into tears threw himself at the feet of his old master ; who still calm and collected embraced the Duke, and continued his way towards the accommodation-ladder, graciously saluting all those who happened to be on the quarter-deck. He reached the Northumberland between one and two o'clock on the 7th of August. He remained on deck conversing familiarly and cheerfully with a number of English who approached him, particularly with Lord Lowther and a Mr. Littleton. At the moment of getting under weigh, a cutter ran down a boat full of spectators, among whom were two women. They were at length under sail for St. Helena. Those of the attendants whom Napoleon was not allowed to take with him were the last to leave the ship. Their departure gave rise to an affecting scene. The Emperor retired to the cabin allotted to him about seven o'clock.

The English Ministry had strongly censured the deference shown to the Emperor on board the Bellerophon, and issued fresh orders in consequence ; so that a totally different style of behaviour was adopted in the Northumberland. The crew betrayed a ridiculous appearance of anxiety to be covered before the Emperor : it had been strictly enjoined to give him no other title than that of *General*, and only to treat him as such. This was the ingenious device of the English Ministers, and this title they thought proper to confer by way of insult and reproach on him whom they had recognised as First Consul ; whom they had so often styled head of the French government ; with whom they had treated as Emperor at Paris, when Lord Lauderdale was sent over to negotiate a peace, and probably had even signed the articles of a treaty at Chatillon. Hence, in a moment of warmth, the Emperor in allusion to this regulation, observed : ' They may call me what they please, but they cannot prevent me from being *myself* ! ' The Emperor who intended (had he landed in England) to have taken the name of Colonel Duroc or Muiron, no longer thought of it now his former titles were disputed.

The ship was in the greatest confusion from the short notice at which she had sailed ; and for the two first days the crew were employed in restoring order and getting ready for the voyage. The following particulars will afford an idea of that part of the Northumberland occupied by the Emperor and his suite.—The space abaft the mizenmast contained two public and two private cabins : the first was a dining-room about ten feet broad, and extending the whole width of the

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

ship, lighted by a port-hole at each end and a skylight above. The drawing-room took up all the remaining space, except two cabins on the right and left, each having an entrance from the dining or mess-room, and another from the drawing-room. The Emperor occupied that on the left, in which his camp-bedstead had been put up; that on the right was appropriated to the Admiral. It was peremptorily enjoined that the drawing-room should be in common and not given up to the Emperor:—was this to provide for his greater safety? Surely he who was kept a prisoner because, if at large, Europe could not contain him, might have been allowed a drawing-room to himself, though it was a thing of no great importance. The form of the dining-table resembled that of the mess-room. The Emperor sat with his back to the drawing-room or after-cabin, and looking towards the head of the ship; on his left sat Madame Bertrand, and on his right the Admiral, who with Madame Montholon filled up one side of the table. At the end next that lady was Captain Ross, who commanded the ship, and opposite him M. Montholon and the Admiral's secretary. The side of the table facing the Emperor was occupied by the Grand-Marshal, the Colonel of the 53rd regiment, Las Cases, and Gourgaud. The Admiral invited one or two of the officers to dinner every day. The band of the 53rd newly-formed played during dinner-time. There were two courses, ill-supplied; and the taste of the hosts was very different from that of the guests. It would not however answer any purpose to be nice. The vessel made as much sail as the wind would permit, in order to get out of the Channel; and stood along the coast of England, to procure additional supplies of sea-stock. On the 10th of the month they cleared the Channel, and lost sight of land. They had now entered upon the dreary unknown course, to which fate had doomed them. This circumstance could make little difference to the Emperor; who wherever he went, had the eye of the world still upon him, as he will have that of future ages. In little more than a month, he had abdicated the throne, and placed himself in the hands of the English, who were now hurrying him to a barren rock in the midst of the ocean—to prove that he had never occupied one, nor a Stuart been driven from that of England!—Since his late reverses, whatever he did was cavilled at. He was blamed for hesitating to abdicate a second time, and then for making the sacrifice; and now he was censured for want of magnanimity in tamely suffering himself to be transported to St. Helena. But was he to contend with a sentinel in the cabin of a ship; or attempt to set fire to the powder-magazine; or kill himself or some one else with his own hand? He had done all he could for glory and his country; and had now only to endure with the same fortitude, with which he had acted. Conquered by fate, he must

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

submit to her award, and be passive under the worst blows that pride and malice could inflict.

The course of the ship was shaped to cross the Bay of Biscay, and double Cape Finisterre. The wind was fair, though light, and the heat excessive. Nothing could be more monotonous than the time they now passed. The Emperor breakfasted in his own cabin at irregular hours. He sent for one of his attendants every morning to know what was going on ; the distance run, the state of the wind, and other particulars connected with their progress. He read a great deal, dressed towards four o'clock, and then came into the public cabin : here he played at chess with one of the party : at five o'clock the Admiral having come out of his cabin a few minutes before, announced that dinner was on the table. It is well known that Napoleon was scarcely ever more than fifteen minutes at dinner : here the two courses alone took up nearly an hour and a half. This was a serious annoyance to him, though he never noticed it : his features, gestures, and manner always evinced perfect equanimity. Neither the new system of cookery, the difference or quality of the dishes ever met with his censure or observation : he never expressed any wish or objection on the subject. He was waited on by two valets, who stood behind his chair. At first the Admiral was in the habit of offering to help the Emperor ; but the acknowledgment of the latter was expressed so coldly, that the practice was given up. The Admiral continued very attentive ; but thenceforth only pointed out to the servants what was preferable : they alone minded these matters, to which the Emperor appeared wholly indifferent. He was generally silent, remaining in the midst of conversation as if unacquainted with the language, though it was French. If he spoke, it was to ask some technical or scientific question ; or to address a few words to those whom the Admiral occasionally asked to dinner.

The Emperor already tired by the length of the dinner, could not have endured the English custom of sitting drinking afterwards ; he rose, therefore, from the first day, immediately after coffee had been handed round, and went on deck, followed by the Grand-Marshal and Las Cases. This disconcerted Admiral Cockburn, who expressed his surprise to his officers ; but Madame Bertrand, whose maternal language was English, replied with spirit—' Do not forget, Sir, that your guest is a man who has governed a large portion of the world ; and that kings once contended for the honour of being admitted to his table.'—' Very true,' rejoined the Admiral ; and from that time did his utmost to comply with the Emperor's habits. He shortened the time of sitting at table, ordering coffee for Napoleon and those who accompanied him, even before the rest of the company had finished

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

their dinner. The moment Napoleon had taken his coffee, he left the cabin ; upon which every body rose till he had quitted the room, and then continued to take their wine for another hour. The Emperor remained walking on deck till dark, which became his regular practice. On returning to the after-cabin, he sat down to play *vingt-un* with some of his suite ; and generally retired in about half an hour. On the morning of the 15th, all his suite asked permission to be admitted to his presence, and entered his cabin at the same time. He was not aware of the cause of this visit : it was his birth-day, which seemed to have altogether escaped his recollection. They had been accustomed to see him on that day on a larger stage and in far different circumstances. What a contrast ; and what a train of reflections it must have called up ! Usually, the Emperor lost at play : this day he won a considerable sum : while those present were congratulating him on his singular good fortune, an English officer observed, that it was the anniversary of his birth-day.

On the 16th they doubled Cape Finisterre ; and up to the 21st, passing the Straits of Gibraltar, continued their course along the coast of Africa towards Madeira. The Emperor commonly remained in his cabin the whole morning : from the extreme heat, he wore a very slight dress. He could not sleep well, and frequently rose in the night. Reading was his chief occupation. He often sent for Count Las Cases to translate from the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and such other books as were on board, whatever related to St. Helena or the countries by which they were sailing. This led to the mention of the *Historical Atlas*, a work by Las Cases, with which Napoleon was so much pleased that he said, had he known of it sooner, he would have had it introduced into all the schools and Lyceums in France. In the walks on deck after dinner Las Cases was frequently left alone with the Emperor, as Bertrand had to attend his wife, who suffered greatly from seasickness. Napoleon used to start a subject of conversation, or revive that of some preceding day ; and when he had taken eight or nine turns the whole length of the deck, he would seat himself on the second gun from the gangway on the larboard side. The midshipmen soon observed this habitual predilection, so that the cannon was thenceforth called the *Emperor's gun*. It was here that Napoleon often conversed for hours together, and communicated to his faithful follower a number of particulars concerning himself and others, most of which have been inserted in the course of the preceding work.

On the 22nd they came within sight of Madeira, and at night arrived off the port. They stopped to take in provisions for a day or two. The Emperor was indisposed. A sudden gale arose ; and the air was filled with small particles of sand and the suffocating exhalations

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

from the deserts of Africa. In the evening of the 24th they made way again, and sailed on smoothly and rapidly ; the time seeming long as it passed, and brief in the retrospect from the want of variety. The Emperor added to his amusements by a game at piquet. He was but an indifferent chess-player, and there was no very good one on board. He asked jestingly, ' How he frequently beat those who beat better players than himself ? ' *Vingt-un* was given up, as they played too high at it ; and Napoleon had a great aversion to gaming. On the 27th they passed the Canaries without seeing the famous peak of Teneriffe, and on the 29th they crossed the tropic. One night a negro threw himself overboard to avoid a flogging, which occasioned a great noise and bustle. A midshipman, an interesting youth between ten and twelve, meeting *Las Cases* descending into the cabin, and thinking he was going to inform Napoleon of the cause, caught hold of his coat, and in a tone of great concern exclaimed, ' Ah, Sir, do not alarm the Emperor ! Tell him the noise is owing to an accident ! ' In general the midshipmen on board behaved with marked respect and attention to the Emperor : they watched his motions with an anxious eye, and either by signs or words directed the sailors to avoid incommoding him. He sometimes noticed this conduct, and remarked that youthful hearts were always prone to enthusiasm. On the 1st of September they found themselves in the latitude of the Cape de Verd Islands : the Admiral expected to see them on the right, but they were on his left. Every thing now promised a prosperous passage : they were already far advanced on their course. But the time hung heavy, and nothing but occupation could lighten it. *Las Cases* had undertaken to teach his son English ; and the Emperor also expressed a wish to learn. He, however, soon grew tired and laid it aside ; nor was it resumed till long after. His manners and habits were always the same : never did a wish or a murmur escape his lips ; he invariably appeared contented, patient, and good-humoured. The Admiral, who had assumed a certain distance at first, gradually laid aside his reserve, and took a greater interest in his captive. He pointed out the danger incurred by coming on deck after dinner, owing to the damp of the evening : the Emperor would then sometimes take his arm and prolong the conversation, which never failed to gratify him exceedingly. Napoleon sometimes talked on naval affairs, on the French resources in the south, and on the improvements he had contemplated in the ports and harbours of the Mediterranean—to all which the Admiral listened with deep attention, and as if fearful of interruption, and is said to have carefully noted down every particular.

Meanwhile, Napoleon observed that *Las Cases* was busily employed ; and suspecting the cause, obtained a sight of his journal, with which

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

he was not displeased. He however took notice that some of the military details and anecdotes which were set down gave but a meagre and unsatisfactory idea of the subject of war. This first led to the proposal of his writing his own *Memoirs*, which was discussed at various times afterwards. At length, the Emperor came to a determination; and on Saturday the 9th of September, he called his secretary into his cabin and dictated to him for the first time some particulars of the siege of Toulon, which are to be found in the campaigns of Italy. On approaching the line, they fell in with what are called the trade-winds, that blow constantly from the east. The course of the ship is regulated by these winds. The heat had been very moderate after leaving Madeira. On the 16th there was a considerable fall of rain to the great joy of the sailors, who were in want of water. The rain began to fall heavily, just as the Emperor had got upon deck to take his afternoon walk. But this did not disappoint him of his usual exercise; he merely called for his famous grey great-coat, which the crew regarded with much interest. The English were fond of talking with the French officers, and they mutually surprised each other by the opposition of their views and sentiments. One of the principal officers of the ship one day said—‘I suppose you would be very much alarmed if we were to land you on the coast of France?’—‘Why so?’—‘Because the King would make you pay dearly for having left your country to follow another sovereign, and for wearing a cockade which he has prohibited.’—‘And is this language,’ was the answer, ‘becoming an Englishman? You must be strangely degenerated. You are, it is true, far removed from the period of your Revolution, to which you so justly apply the epithet *glorious*. But we who are nearer to ours, by which we have gained so much, may tell you that every word you utter is heresy.’ The English were also very fond of asking questions concerning the Emperor and the libels that had been published against him. This led to an examination and exposure of several of them. No man had ever been more assailed by calumny than Napoleon, which is not to be wondered at: but he would never permit any one to reply to the attacks that were made upon him. ‘Whatever pains,’ he said, ‘might have been bestowed on such answers, they would only have given additional weight to the accusations they were intended to refute. Facts were the most convincing answers. A fine monument, another good law, or a new victory were sufficient to defeat a thousand such falsehoods. Declamation passes away, but deeds remain.’

The Emperor now began regularly to dictate the campaigns of Italy. For the first few days he viewed the occupation with indifference; but the regularity and promptitude with which his amanuensis presented his daily task, together with the progress that was made, soon excited

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

from the deserts of Africa. In the evening of the 24th they made way again, and sailed on smoothly and rapidly; the time seeming long as it passed, and brief in the retrospect from the want of variety. The Emperor added to his amusements by a game at piquet. He was but an indifferent chess-player, and there was no very good one on board. He asked jestingly, 'How he frequently beat those who beat better players than himself?' *Vingt-un* was given up, as they played too high at it; and Napoleon had a great aversion to gaming. On the 27th they passed the Canaries without seeing the famous peak of Teneriffe, and on the 29th they crossed the tropic. One night a negro threw himself overboard to avoid a flogging, which occasioned a great noise and bustle. A midshipman, an interesting youth between ten and twelve, meeting *Las Cases* descending into the cabin, and thinking he was going to inform Napoleon of the cause, caught hold of his coat, and in a tone of great concern exclaimed, 'Ah, Sir, do not alarm the Emperor! Tell him the noise is owing to an accident!' In general the midshipmen on board behaved with marked respect and attention to the Emperor: they watched his motions with an anxious eye, and either by signs or words directed the sailors to avoid incommoding him. He sometimes noticed this conduct, and remarked that youthful hearts were always prone to enthusiasm. On the 1st of September they found themselves in the latitude of the Cape de Verd Islands: the Admiral expected to see them on the right, but they were on his left. Every thing now promised a prosperous passage: they were already far advanced on their course. But the time hung heavy, and nothing but occupation could lighten it. *Las Cases* had undertaken to teach his son English; and the Emperor also expressed a wish to learn. He, however, soon grew tired and laid it aside; nor was it resumed till long after. His manners and habits were always the same: never did a wish or a murmur escape his lips; he invariably appeared contented, patient, and good-humoured. The Admiral, who had assumed a certain distance at first, gradually laid aside his reserve, and took a greater interest in his captive. He pointed out the danger incurred by coming on deck after dinner, owing to the damp of the evening: the Emperor would then sometimes take his arm and prolong the conversation, which never failed to gratify him exceedingly. Napoleon sometimes talked on naval affairs, on the French resources in the south, and on the improvements he had contemplated in the ports and harbours of the Mediterranean—to all which the Admiral listened with deep attention, and as if fearful of interruption, and is said to have carefully noted down every particular.

Meanwhile, Napoleon observed that *Las Cases* was busily employed; and suspecting the cause, obtained a sight of his journal, with which

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

he was not displeased. He however took notice that some of the military details and anecdotes which were set down gave but a meagre and unsatisfactory idea of the subject of war. This first led to the proposal of his writing his own *Memoirs*, which was discussed at various times afterwards. At length, the Emperor came to a determination; and on Saturday the 9th of September, he called his secretary into his cabin and dictated to him for the first time some particulars of the siege of Toulon, which are to be found in the campaigns of Italy. On approaching the line, they fell in with what are called the trade-winds, that blow constantly from the east. The course of the ship is regulated by these winds. The heat had been very moderate after leaving Madeira. On the 16th there was a considerable fall of rain to the great joy of the sailors, who were in want of water. The rain began to fall heavily, just as the Emperor had got upon deck to take his afternoon walk. But this did not disappoint him of his usual exercise; he merely called for his famous grey great-coat, which the crew regarded with much interest. The English were fond of talking with the French officers, and they mutually surprised each other by the opposition of their views and sentiments. One of the principal officers of the ship one day said—‘I suppose you would be very much alarmed if we were to land you on the coast of France?’—‘Why so?’—‘Because the King would make you pay dearly for having left your country to follow another sovereign, and for wearing a cockade which he has prohibited.’—‘And is this language,’ was the answer, ‘becoming an Englishman? You must be strangely degenerated. You are, it is true, far removed from the period of your Revolution, to which you so justly apply the epithet *glorious*. But we who are nearer to ours, by which we have gained so much, may tell you that every word you utter is heresy.’ The English were also very fond of asking questions concerning the Emperor and the libels that had been published against him. This led to an examination and exposure of several of them. No man had ever been more assailed by calumny than Napoleon, which is not to be wondered at: but he would never permit any one to reply to the attacks that were made upon him. ‘Whatever pains,’ he said, ‘might have been bestowed on such answers, they would only have given additional weight to the accusations they were intended to refute. Facts were the most convincing answers. A fine monument, another good law, or a new victory were sufficient to defeat a thousand such falsehoods. Declamation passes away, but deeds remain.’

The Emperor now began regularly to dictate the campaigns of Italy. For the first few days he viewed the occupation with indifference; but the regularity and promptitude with which his amanuensis presented his daily task, together with the progress that was made, soon excited

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

an interest ; and at length the pleasure he derived from this occupation rendered it in a manner necessary to him. He was sure to send for Las Cases about eleven o'clock every morning, and he seemed to await the hour with impatience. He had what was dictated on the preceding day read to him ; and he then dictated farther with great rapidity and earnestness. In this way the time passed till four o'clock arrived, when his valet was summoned. He then proceeded to the state-cabin and spent the time till dinner in playing at piquet or chess. After dinner, the Emperor never failed to allude to his morning dictation, as if pleased with the occupation and amusement it afforded him. Oh mighty heart ! that having done and suffered all, could ever summon resolution to turn its thoughts from the image of the past or form another wish or purpose, and that flung itself into the dreary void before it, sustained by the greatness of its own nature ; and becoming to itself, as it was to others, an abstraction, an idea, a name in history, could be amused with casual trifles, and sit down contented under the loss of the empire of the world as if it had been a game at chess !

On the 23rd of September they passed the line. This was a day of great merriment and disorder among the crew ; it was the ceremony which the English sailors call the *Christening*. No one is spared ; and the officers are generally more roughly handled than any one else. The Admiral who had previously amused himself with an alarming description of this ceremony, now very courteously exempted his guests from the inconvenience and ridicule attending it. The Emperor was scrupulously respected through the whole of this Saturnalian festivity. On being informed of the decorum which had been observed with regard to him, he ordered a hundred Napoleons to be presented to the grotesque Neptune and his crew, which the Admiral opposed, perhaps from motives of prudence as well as politeness. One afternoon, about this period, the sailors caught an enormous shark ; and Napoleon going too near it out of curiosity, had like to have met with a serious accident.

The west wind which had blown for some time still continued, and drove them from their course. The Emperor every morning continued his dictation, in which he daily took more interest. He had at first nothing to guide him but a wretched work, entitled ' Wars of the French in Italy.' The Emperor glanced through it, and his memory soon supplied all deficiencies. When he commenced his stated task, he complained that the circumstances to which he wished to recur were no longer familiar to him. After considering a few moments he would rise and walk about, and then begin to dictate, when he became quite another man, and every thing seemed to come as if by inspiration,—places, dates, phrases—nothing stopped him.

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

Owing to the haste with which they had been hurried from England, the painting of the ship had been only lately finished; and this circumstance confined Napoleon, whose sense of smell was very acute, to his room for two days. They were now, in the beginning of October, driven into the Gulf of Guinea, where they met a French vessel bound for the isle of Bourbon. They spoke with the captain, who expressed his surprise and sorrow when he learnt that Napoleon was on board. The wind continued unfavourable and the ship made little progress. The sailors grumbled at the Admiral, who had gone out of the usual course. At length they approached the termination of their voyage. The weather cleared up and the wind became favourable; but this change did not take place till twenty-four hours before their arrival. On the 14th, the Admiral had informed them that he expected to come within sight of St. Helena that day. They had scarcely risen from table when their ears were saluted with the cry of *Land!* This was within a quarter of an hour of the time that had been fixed on. The Emperor went on the fore-castle to see the island; but it was still hardly distinguishable. At day-break the next morning, they had a tolerably clear view of it: it looked considerable at first, but seemed to diminish as they approached. At length, about seventy days after their departure from England, and a hundred and ten after their quitting Paris, they cast anchor about noon. They found in the harbour several vessels of the squadron which had separated from them, and which they thought they had left behind. The Emperor, contrary to custom, dressed early and went upon deck: he went forward to the gangway to view the island. He beheld a kind of village surrounded by numerous barren hills towering to the clouds. Every platform, every aperture, the brow of every hill was planted with cannon. The Emperor viewed the prospect through his glass. His countenance underwent no change. He soon left the deck; and sending for Las Cases, proceeded to his day's work. The Admiral, who had gone ashore very early, returned about six much fatigued. He had been walking over various parts of the island, and at length thought he had found a habitation that would suit his captives. The place stood in need of repairs, which might occupy two months. His orders were not to let the French quit their wooden dungeon till their prison on shore was ready to receive them. He was however incapable of such a piece of barbarity, and undertook, on his own responsibility, to set them ashore next day.

On the 16th, after dinner, the Emperor, accompanied by the Grand-Marshal, got into a boat to go ashore. As he passed, the officers assembled on the quarter-deck, and the greater part of the crew on the gangways. The Emperor, before he stepped into the boat, sent for the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

an interest ; and at length the pleasure he derived from this occupation rendered it in a manner necessary to him. He was sure to send for Las Cases about eleven o'clock every morning, and he seemed to await the hour with impatience. He had what was dictated on the preceding day read to him ; and he then dictated farther with great rapidity and earnestness. In this way the time passed till four o'clock arrived, when his valet was summoned. He then proceeded to the state-cabin and spent the time till dinner in playing at piquet or chess. After dinner, the Emperor never failed to allude to his morning dictation, as if pleased with the occupation and amusement it afforded him. Oh mighty heart ! that having done and suffered all, could ever summon resolution to turn its thoughts from the image of the past or form another wish or purpose, and that flung itself into the dreary void before it, sustained by the greatness of its own nature ; and becoming to itself, as it was to others, an abstraction, an idea, a name in history, could be amused with casual trifles, and sit down contented under the loss of the empire of the world as if it had been a game at chess !

On the 23rd of September they passed the line. This was a day of great merriment and disorder among the crew ; it was the ceremony which the English sailors call the *Christening*. No one is spared ; and the officers are generally more roughly handled than any one else. The Admiral who had previously amused himself with an alarming description of this ceremony, now very courteously exempted his guests from the inconvenience and ridicule attending it. The Emperor was scrupulously respected through the whole of this Saturnalian festivity. On being informed of the decorum which had been observed with regard to him, he ordered a hundred Napoleons to be presented to the grotesque Neptune and his crew, which the Admiral opposed, perhaps from motives of prudence as well as politeness. One afternoon, about this period, the sailors caught an enormous shark ; and Napoleon going too near it out of curiosity, had like to have met with a serious accident.

The west wind which had blown for some time still continued, and drove them from their course. The Emperor every morning continued his dictation, in which he daily took more interest. He had at first nothing to guide him but a wretched work, entitled ' Wars of the French in Italy.' The Emperor glanced through it, and his memory soon supplied all deficiencies. When he commenced his stated task, he complained that the circumstances to which he wished to recur were no longer familiar to him. After considering a few moments he would rise and walk about, and then begin to dictate, when he became quite another man, and every thing seemed to come as if by inspiration, — places, dates, phrases — nothing stopped him.

DEPARTURE FOR ST. HELENA

Owing to the haste with which they had been hurried from England, the painting of the ship had been only lately finished ; and this circumstance confined Napoleon, whose sense of smell was very acute, to his room for two days. They were now, in the beginning of October, driven into the Gulf of Guinea, where they met a French vessel bound for the isle of Bourbon. They spoke with the captain, who expressed his surprise and sorrow when he learnt that Napoleon was on board. The wind continued unfavourable and the ship made little progress. The sailors grumbled at the Admiral, who had gone out of the usual course. At length they approached the termination of their voyage. The weather cleared up and the wind became favourable ; but this change did not take place till twenty-four hours before their arrival. On the 14th, the Admiral had informed them that he expected to come within sight of St. Helena that day. They had scarcely risen from table when their ears were saluted with the cry of *Land !* This was within a quarter of an hour of the time that had been fixed on. The Emperor went on the fore-castle to see the island ; but it was still hardly distinguishable. At day-break the next morning, they had a tolerably clear view of it : it looked considerable at first, but seemed to diminish as they approached. At length, about seventy days after their departure from England, and a hundred and ten after their quitting Paris, they cast anchor about noon. They found in the harbour several vessels of the squadron which had separated from them, and which they thought they had left behind. The Emperor, contrary to custom, dressed early and went upon deck : he went forward to the gangway to view the island. He beheld a kind of village surrounded by numerous barren hills towering to the clouds. Every platform, every aperture, the brow of every hill was planted with cannon. The Emperor viewed the prospect through his glass. His countenance underwent no change. He soon left the deck ; and sending for Las Cases, proceeded to his day's work. The Admiral, who had gone ashore very early, returned about six much fatigued. He had been walking over various parts of the island, and at length thought he had found a habitation that would suit his captives. The place stood in need of repairs, which might occupy two months. His orders were not to let the French quit their wooden dungeon till their prison on shore was ready to receive them. He was however incapable of such a piece of barbarity, and undertook, on his own responsibility, to set them ashore next day.

On the 16th, after dinner, the Emperor, accompanied by the Grand-Marshal, got into a boat to go ashore. As he passed, the officers assembled on the quarter-deck, and the greater part of the crew on the gangways. The Emperor, before he stepped into the boat, sent for the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

captain of the vessel, and took leave of him, desiring him at the same time to convey his thanks to the officers and crew. These words appeared to produce the liveliest sensation in all by whom they were understood, or to whom they were interpreted. The remainder of his suite landed about eight. They found the Emperor in the apartments which had been assigned to him : a few minutes after, he went up stairs to his chamber. He was lodged in a sort of inn in the town of St. Helena, which consists only of one very short street or row of houses, built in a narrow valley between two rocky hills.

CHAPTER LVIII

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

THE Emperor, the Grand-Marshal, and the Admiral riding out to visit Longwood, which had been chosen for the Emperor's residence, on their return saw a small villa with a pavilion attached to it about two miles from the town, the residence of Mr. Balcombe, a merchant of the island. This spot pleased the Emperor ; and the Admiral was of opinion that it would be better for him to remain here than to return to the town, where the sentinels at his door, with the crowds collected round it, in a manner confined him to his chamber. The pavilion was a sort of summer-house on a pointed eminence, about thirty or forty paces from the house, where the family were accustomed to resort in fine weather to amuse themselves : this was the obscure retreat hired for the temporary abode of the Emperor ; and he took possession of it immediately. There is a carriage-road from the town ; and the valley is here less rugged in its aspect. Las Cases was soon sent for. As he ascended the winding path leading to the pavilion, he saw Napoleon standing at the threshold of the door. His body was slightly bent, and his hands behind his back : he wore his usual neat and simple uniform and his celebrated little hat. Las Cases paused to look at him with that feeling of respect which greatness and misfortune inspire ! In none of his campaigns had he been so badly lodged. The summer-house contained only one room on the ground-floor, with neither curtains nor shutters, and scarcely a seat in the room. The Emperor was alone : the servants were preparing his bed. He took a fancy to walk a little ; but there was no level ground on any side of the pavilion, which was surrounded by huge pieces of rock. He took the arm of his companion ; and began to converse in a cheerful strain. Night was advancing,

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

profound silence, undisturbed solitude reigned around :—here then was the man who had governed the world, stripped of every thing but his unfading renown, and with all his grandeur concentrated in himself alone; and there were persons who, not satisfied with this, were disposed to crush him still further and insult over his fall! When Napoleon was about to retire to rest, the servants found that one of the windows was open close to the bed: they barricadoed it as well as they could, so as to exclude the air, of the effects of which the Emperor was very susceptible. Las Cases ascended to an upper room, about seven feet square, with only a bed and a mattress on the floor, which served for himself and his son. From this retreat they could hear the sound of the Emperor's voice and distinguish his words. The valets-de-chambre lay stretched in their cloaks across the threshold of the door. Such is the description of the first night Napoleon passed at the Briars.

They breakfasted without a table-cloth or plates; and the remains of the preceding day's dinner furnished their repast. An English officer was lodged in the house as their guard; and two inferior officers marched up and down before the door with considerable state, to watch their motions. The Emperor next proceeded to his dictation, which occupied him for several hours; and then took a walk in the garden, where he was met by the two Miss Balcombes, lively and innocent girls about fourteen or fifteen years of age, who presented him with flowers, and overwhelmed him with the most whimsical questions. Napoleon was amused by their familiarity, to which he had been little accustomed. 'We have been to a masked ball,' said he, when the young ladies had taken their leave.

The next day a chicken was brought for breakfast, which the Emperor undertook to carve himself, and was surprised at his succeeding so well, it being a long time since he had done so much. The coffee was so bad, that on tasting it he thought himself poisoned, and sent it away. He happened to be using a snuff-box set with ancient medals, having Greek inscriptions. He gave it to Las Cases to translate one of the names, but presently laughed and said, 'I see you are no better a scholar than myself.' It was then handed to young Las Cases, a boy of twelve or thirteen years of age, who easily read the names of Mithridates, Demetrius Poliorcetes, and some others. This led Napoleon to remark on the excellent education he had given to the youth of France. He said, if he had thought only of himself and of securing his own authority, he should have hid learning under a bushel, instead of doing every thing in his power to diffuse and improve knowledge. The plan of his University, he added, had been spoiled by others. In the evening, the Emperor went to visit Mr. Balcombe. The young ladies, and an

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

English gentleman who was there, fell into some droll anachronisms respecting persons they had read of in history and in the newspapers of the day. On the 21st the Admiral came to visit the Emperor, and might have been kept waiting outside the door, as there was no one but Las Cases to open it for him. Among other privations, Napoleon could not procure a bath, which was so necessary to his health. In the evening, the whole of his suite met, and were assembled round him, when he made some bitter reflections on their situation. The English Ministers had treated him as a prisoner of war : he was not one ; or if he were, the right over him ceased with the war itself. His detention and the mode of it was equally an act of violence and duplicity. The Emperor transmitted a paper stating these arguments (and desiring to hear news of his wife and son) to the English Ministry, by the captain of the vessel which was about to set sail on its return to Europe.

The mornings were passed in business : in the evening the Emperor sometimes strolled to the neighbouring habitation, where the young ladies made him play at whist. The *Campaign of Italy* was nearly finished ; and Las Cases proposed that the other Frenchmen who were lodged in the town should come up every morning to assist in writing out the *Campaign of Egypt*, the *History of the Consulate*, &c. The suggestion pleased the Emperor, so that from that time one or two of his suite came regularly every day to write to his dictation. They then staid to dinner, and thus afforded the Emperor a little more amusement than he had received hitherto. A tent, the gift of the Colonel of the 53rd regiment, was spread out so as to form a prolongation of the pavilion. Their cook took up his abode at Briars. The table-linen was taken from the trunks ; the plate was set forth ; and the first dinner after these new arrangements was a sort of *fête*. One day at dinner, Napoleon casting his eye on one of the dishes of his campaign-service on which the Imperial arms were engraved, 'How they have spoiled that !' he exclaimed ; and he could not refrain from observing, that the King was in great haste to take possession of the Imperial plate, which certainly did not belong to him. One day he drew out a cabinet, in which were a number of medallions, given him by the Pope and other potentates ; some letters of Louis XVIII. which he had left behind him on his writing-table, in the suddenness of his flight from the Thuilleries on the 20th of March ; and a number of other letters found in the portfolio of M. Blacas, intended to calumniate Napoleon. He now never dressed till about four o'clock : he then walked in the garden, which he particularly liked on account of its solitude : the English soldiers having been removed at Mr. Balcombe's request. A little arbour in it was covered with canvas, and a chair and table placed in it ; and here the Emperor afterwards dictated a great part of his *Memoirs*.

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

In the evening, when he did not go out, he generally contrived to prolong the conversation till eleven or twelve o'clock. He avoided retiring to bed too early; as when he did so, he awoke in the night, and was obliged to rise and read, to divert his mind from sorrowful reflections.

It was now November. Napoleon one morning had a misunderstanding with Bertrand about a letter of complaint to the Governor, which had not been delivered. 'If you thought it improperly expressed, why did you not say so? This did not require more than twenty-four hours to deliberate upon; but it is now a fortnight.' His good-humour, however, soon returned; and in the evening, to show it had left no disagreeable impression on his mind, he repeated more than once, 'It was after we had made it up with the Grand-Marshal—it was before the misunderstanding with the Grand-Marshal.' The Emperor, in conversing on the subject, expressed doubts of the accounts of the prodigious armies of Xerxes and Darius, and of the brilliant victories obtained by the Greeks over them. He believed, on the contrary, in the numerous armies of Tamerlane and Gengiskan, and the hordes of barbarians who overran Europe in the middle ages: and said the situation of Russia was admirably calculated to bring about another such catastrophe. He observed, that a conqueror to succeed must be ferocious, thinking probably that he had shown too much mildness. They had hitherto had no books to assist them in their labours, and were glad to obtain from Major Hudson, a resident in the island, the volumes of the *Annual Register*, from 1793 to 1807.

The Emperor had been dictating in the garden to Generals Montholon and Gourgaud; and on walking out, found himself fatigued and indisposed. He was annoyed at seeing some females advancing to throw themselves awkwardly in his way: he turned aside to avoid them. He had three horses at his disposal; and it was suggested that riding might be beneficial to him; but he replied that he never could reconcile himself to the idea of riding with an English officer constantly at his side; adding, that every thing in life must be reduced to calculation, and that if the vexation arising from seeing his jailor were greater than the advantage he might derive from riding, it was of course advisable to renounce the amusement altogether. The horses were accordingly sent back. The Emperor closed the day with a walk. After some broken conversations, he looked at his watch, and was glad to find it was near midnight. He said that sometimes he could not reflect without dismay on the many years he might still have to live and on the inutility of a protracted old age; and that if he were sure France was tranquil and happy and not needing his aid, he should have lived long enough.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Thus time passed with little variety or interruption. The weather at this time of the year became delightful, and Napoleon insensibly recovered from his indisposition. One day, his usual task being done, he strolled out in a new direction. He proceeded towards the town till he came within sight of the road and shipping. As he was returning, he met Mrs. Balcombe and a Mrs. Stuart, a very pretty woman about twenty, who was on her way back from Bombay to England. The Emperor conversed with her respecting the manners and customs of India, and the inconveniences of a long sea-voyage, particularly to females. He also spoke of Scotland, which was Mrs. Stuart's native country; said a great deal about Ossian, and complimented the lady on the climate of India not having spoiled her clear Scottish complexion. At this moment, some slaves carrying heavy boxes passed by on the road; Mrs. Balcombe desired them to keep back; but the Emperor interfered, saying, 'Respect the burden, Madam!' At these words, Mrs. Stuart, who had been attentively observing the Emperor's features, said in a low tone of voice to her friend:—'Heavens! what a countenance and what a character! How different from what I had been led to expect!'—Napoleon shortly after repeated the same walk and went into the house of Major Hudson who had lent him the *Annual Register*, and where he saw some beautiful children at play at the gate. This visit occasioned considerable alarm to the constituted authorities. The Governor gave a ball, to which the French were invited; and Las Cases about the same time rode over to Longwood with Madame Bertrand in a carriage drawn by six oxen, to see what advance had been made in the preparations for their reception there. His report on his return was not very favourable. They were to have remained only a few days at Briars; and they had now been six weeks there, during which time Napoleon had been nearly as much confined as if on board the vessel. His health began to be impaired by it. Las Cases gives it as his opinion that the Emperor did not possess that constitution of iron that is usually ascribed to him; and that it was the strength of his mind, not of his body, that carried him through the labours of the field and of the cabinet. In speaking on this subject, Napoleon himself observes that nature had endowed him with two peculiarities: one was the power of sleeping whenever he needed repose, at any hour or in any place; another advantage as he considered it was his being incapable of committing any injurious excess either in eating or drinking. 'If,' said he, 'I go the least beyond my mark, my stomach instantly revolts.' He was subject to nausea from very slight causes, and to colds from any change of air.

Mr. Balcombe's little garden, in which they so often walked, was superintended by an old negro. The first time they saw him, the

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

Emperor according to his usual custom desired several questions to be put to him ; and his answers excited a strong interest in his favour. He was a Malay Indian, and had been forced from his home by the crew of an English vessel and sold at St. Helena, where he had continued ever since in slavery. His story bore every mark of truth. The Emperor expressed a wish to purchase him, and send him back to his own country ; but when they left Briars, poor Toby, sharing the fate of all earthly things, was forgotten. The Emperor generally stopped near his hut, and after entering into talk with him, as if wishing to study the feelings of the old slave, closed the conversation by giving him a Napoleon. He became much attached to the Emperor and called him the *Good Gentleman*. These meetings with the old Indian were mostly followed by novel, spirited, and characteristic remarks on the part of the Emperor. ‘Poor Toby,’ he would say, ‘has been torn away from his family, from his native land, and sold to slavery : could any thing be more miserable for himself or more criminal in others ! If this crime be the act of the English captain alone, he is one of the vilest of men ; but if it be that of the whole of the crew, it may have been committed by men, perhaps not so base as might be imagined ; for vice is always individual, and scarcely ever collective. Joseph’s brethren could not bring themselves to slay him ; while Judas, a cool, hypocritical, calculating villain, betrayed his master. A philosopher has affirmed that men are born wicked : it would be both difficult and idle to attempt to discover whether the assertion be true. This, at least, is certain, that the great mass of society is not wicked ; for if the majority were determined to be criminal and to violate the laws, who would have the power to restrain or prevent them ? This is the triumph of civilization ; for this happy result springs from its bosom, and arises out of its nature. Sentiments are for the most part traditional ; we feel them because they were felt by those who preceded us : thus we must look to the development of the human reason and faculties for the only key to social order, the only secret of the legislator. Only those who wish to deceive the people and rule them for their own personal advantage, would desire to keep them in ignorance ; for the more they are enlightened, the more they will feel convinced of the utility of laws and of the necessity of obeying them ; and the more steady, happy, and prosperous will society become. If, however, knowledge should ever be dangerous in the multitude, it can only be when the Government, in opposition to the interests of the people, drives them into an unnatural situation, or dooms the lower classes to perish for want. In such a case, knowledge would inspire them with spirit to defend themselves, or to become criminal.

‘My Code alone, from its simplicity, has been more beneficial to

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

France than the whole mass of laws which preceded it. My schools and my system of mutual instruction are preparing generations yet unborn. Thus, during my reign, crimes were rapidly diminishing; while, on the contrary, with our neighbours in England, they have been increasing to a frightful degree. This alone is sufficient to enable any one to form a decisive judgment of the respective governments.

‘Look at the *United States*, where, without any apparent force or effort, every thing goes on prosperously; every one is happy and contented; and this is because the public wishes and interests are in fact the ruling power. Place the same government at variance with the will and interests of the inhabitants, and you would soon see what disturbance, trouble, and confusion, and above all, what an increase of crimes would ensue.

‘When I acquired the supreme direction of affairs, it was wished that I might become a Washington. Words cost nothing; and no doubt those who were so ready to express the wish, did so without any knowledge of times, places, persons, or things. Had I been in America, I would willingly have been a Washington, and I should have had little merit in so doing; for I do not see how I could reasonably have acted otherwise. But had Washington been in France, exposed to discord within, and invasion from without, I would have defied him to have been what he was in America; at least, he would have been a fool to attempt it, and would only have prolonged the existence of evil. For my own part, I could only have been a *crowned Washington*. It was only in a Congress of kings, in the midst of kings yielding or subdued, that I could become so. Then and there alone, I could successfully display Washington’s moderation, disinterestedness, and wisdom. I could not reasonably attain to this but by means of the *universal Dictatorship*. To this I aspired; can that be thought a crime? Can it be believed that to resign this authority would have been beyond the power of human nature? Sylla, glutted with crimes, dared to abdicate, pursued by public execration! What motive could have checked me, who would have been followed only by blessings? But it remained for me to conquer at Moscow! How many will hereafter regret my disasters and my fall! But to require prematurely of me that sacrifice, for which the time had not arrived, was a vulgar absurdity; and for me to have proclaimed or promised it, would have been taken for hypocrisy and quackery: that was not my way. I repeat, it remained for me to conquer Moscow!’

On another occasion, pausing before Toby, he said:—‘What, after all, is this poor human machine? There is not one whose exterior form is like another, or whose internal organisation resembles the rest!

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

And it is by disregarding this truth that we are led to the commission of so many errors ! Had Toby been a Brutus, he would have put himself to death ; if an Æsop, he would now, perhaps, have been the Governor's adviser ; if an ardent and zealous Christian, he would have borne his chains in the sight of God, and blessed them. As for poor Toby, he endures his misfortunes very quietly ; he stoops to his work, and spends his days in innocent tranquillity.' Then, after looking at him for a few moments in silence, he turned away and said, ' Certainly there is a wide step from poor Toby to a King Richard !—and yet,' continued he, as he walked along, ' the crime is not the less atrocious ; for this man, after all, had his family, his happiness, and his liberty ; and it was a horrible act of cruelty to bring him here to languish in the fetters of his slavery.' Then, suddenly stopping short, he added, ' But I read in your looks, that you think he is not the only example of the sort at St. Helena !' And whether he felt offended at being placed on a parallel with Toby, whether he thought it necessary to raise my spirits, or whatever else might be his reason, he went on with dignity and animation :—' My dear Las Cases, there is not the least resemblance here : if the outrage is of a higher class, the victims also furnish very different resources. We have not been exposed to corporeal sufferings ; or if that had been attempted, we have souls to disappoint our tyrants ! Our situation may even have its charms ! The eyes of the universe are fixed upon us ! We are martyrs in an immortal cause. Millions of human beings are weeping for us : our country sighs, and glory mourns our fate ! We here struggle against the oppression of the Gods, and the prayers of nations are for us !'—After a pause of a few seconds, he continued :—' Besides, this is not the source of my real sufferings. If I considered only myself, perhaps I should have reason to rejoice. Misfortunes are not without their heroism and their glory. Adversity was wanting to my career. Had I died on the throne, enveloped in the dense atmosphere of my power, I should to many have remained a problem ; but now misfortune will enable all to judge of me without disguise.'

The Emperor, among other things, amused himself by reading the *New Eloise*, which he criticised at first very favourably, and afterwards more severely ; and with giving an account to those about him of his different generals. There was now a talk of their removal to Longwood, which had been got nearly ready : they removed there on the 10th of December, 1815. The Emperor invited Mr. Balcombe to breakfast with him that morning, and conversed with him in a very lively and cheerful manner. About two, Admiral Cockburn was announced ; he advanced with an air of embarrassment. In consequence of the restraints imposed upon him at Briars, and the manner

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in which those of his suite residing in the town had been treated, the Emperor had discontinued receiving the visits of the Admiral; yet on the present occasion he behaved towards him as though nothing had happened. At length, they left Briars and set out for Longwood. The Emperor rode the horse which had been brought for him from the Cape: he was a small, sprightly, and tolerably handsome animal. The Emperor wore his uniform of the *Chasseurs* of the Guard: his graceful manner and handsome countenance were particularly remarked. The Admiral was very attentive to him. The road was lined with persons collected to see him pass. At the entrance of Longwood, they found a guard under arms, who rendered the prescribed honours to their illustrious captive. The Emperor's horse, unused to this kind of parade, was startled at the sound of the drum; and refused to proceed without the help of the spur. The Admiral took great pains to point out the minutest details at Longwood. He had himself superintended all the arrangements, among which was a bath. The Emperor was satisfied with every thing, and the Admiral seemed highly pleased. He had anticipated petulance and disdain; but the Emperor manifested perfect good-humour.

They were now settled in their new abode, and could tell the limits of their prison. Longwood, which was originally a farm belonging to the East-India Company, and was afterwards given as a country-residence to the Deputy-Governor, is situated on one of the highest parts of the island. The difference between the temperature of this place and the valley below is very great. It stands on a level height of some extent, and near the eastern coast. Continual and frequently violent winds blow regularly from the same quarter. The sun, though rarely seen, nevertheless exercises its influence on the atmosphere, which is apt to produce disorders in the liver. Heavy and sudden falls of rain inundate the ground; and there is no settled course of the seasons. The sun passes over their heads twice a year. Notwithstanding the abundant rains, the grass is either nipped by the wind or dried up by the heat. The water which is conveyed up to Longwood by pipes, is so unwholesome as to be unfit for use till it has been boiled. The trees which at a distance impart a smiling aspect to the country, are merely gum-trees, a wretched kind of shrub, affording no shade. On one hand, the horizon is bounded by the ocean: but the rest of the scene presents only a mass of huge barren rocks, deep gulfs, and desolate valleys; and in the distance appear the green and misty chain of mountains, above which towers Diana's Peak. In short, Longwood can be agreeable only to the traveller after the fatigues of a long voyage, to whom the sight of any country is a relief. Las Cases seems to hint that they had paid dear for this pleasing illusion: but it was not from

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

the reports of such travellers that they were sent to St. Helena. Of that at least we may be sure.

Workmen had been employed for two months in preparing Longwood for their reception; the result of their labours, however, amounted to little. The entrance to the house was through a room which had been just built, and which was intended to answer the double purpose of an anti-chamber and a dining-room. This apartment led to another, which was made the drawing-room: beyond this was a third room running in a cross direction and very dark. This was intended to be the depository of the Emperor's maps and books, but it was afterwards converted into the dining-room. The Emperor's chamber opened into this apartment on the right-hand side. This chamber was divided into two equal parts, forming the Emperor's cabinet and sleeping-room: a little external gallery served for a bathing-room. Opposite the Emperor's chamber, at the other extremity of the building, were the apartments of Madame Montholon, her husband, and her son, which have been since used as the Emperor's library. Detached from this part of the house, was a little square room on the ground-floor, contiguous to the kitchen, which was assigned to Las Cases. His son was obliged to ascend to his through a trap-door and by the help of a ladder; it was a loft in which there was hardly room for his bed. The windows and beds had no curtains. The furniture was mean and scanty. Bertrand and his family were left at a distance of two miles at a place called *Hut's-Gate*. General Gourgaud slept under a tent, as well as Mr. O'Meara, and the officer commanding the Guard. They were surrounded by a kind of garden, which was so only in the name. In front, and separated from the house by a tolerably deep ravine, was encamped the 53rd regiment, different parties of which were stationed on the neighbouring heights. The domestic establishment of the Emperor consisted of eleven persons, whose names are inscribed below.¹

On the 12th Colonel Wilks, formerly Governor of the island, and who had been succeeded by the Admiral, came to visit the Emperor: on the 14th the *Minden* sailed for Europe, by which letters were forwarded to London and Paris. As soon as all his suite were

¹ Marchand, native of Paris, valet-de-chambre.

St. Denis, called Aly, native of Versailles, the same.

Noverraz, Swiss, the same.

Santini, Corsican, the same.

Archambault, sen. and Archambault, jun. born at Fontainebleau, groom.

Gentilini, native of Elba, footman.

Cypriani, Corsican, died at St. Helena, maître d'hôtel.

Pierron, native of Paris, butler.

Lepage, cook. Rousseau, native of Fontainebleau, steward.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

assembled at Longwood, Napoleon determined to settle his establishment, and to assign to each the employment fitted to their respective capacities. Most of them were strangers to one another; and there was little affinity between them in age, character, or pursuits. Their attachment to the Emperor was the only thing they had in common: he was the centre around which they revolved: and it was his good temper and love of justice that kept them together and prevented disagreements from breaking out amongst them or soon reconciled their differences. On his first arrival, he went to visit the barracks occupied by some Chinese living on the island, and a place called Longwood Farm. He complained to Las Cases that they had been of late idle: but by degrees their hours and the employment of them became fixed and regular. The Campaign of Italy being now finished, the Emperor corrected it and dictated on other subjects. This was their morning's work. They dined late, Madame Montholon being seated on the Emperor's right, Las Cases on his left; and Gourgaud, Montholon, and Las Cases's son sitting opposite. The smell of the paint not being yet gone off, they remained not more than ten minutes at table, and the dessert was prepared in the adjoining apartment, where coffee was served up, and conversation commenced. Scenes were read from Moliere, Racine, and Voltaire: and regret was always expressed at their not having a copy of Corneille. They then played at *reversis*, which had been the Emperor's favourite game in his youth. The recollection was pleasing to him, and he thought he could amuse himself at it for any length of time, but was soon undeceived. His aim was always to make the *reversis*, that is, to win every trick. Character develops itself in the smallest things. He read a libel on himself (which it was not difficult to meet with even at St. Helena) and contrasted the compliments which had passed between himself and the Queen of Prussia with the brutal behaviour ascribed to him in the English newspapers. On the other hand, two common sailors had at different times, while he was at Longwood and at Briars, in spite of orders and at all risks made their way through the sentinels to gain a sight of Napoleon and to testify their regard for him. On seeing their emotion and the interest they took in him, he exclaimed:—'This is fanaticism! Yes, imagination rules the world!' By degrees, the prejudices of the English who came in contact with him wore off; and they wondered at the gross imposition which had been so long and so successfully practised upon them. Even the Admiral, in his frequent disputes with the French, did not hesitate to declare that 'the Emperor was by far the most good-natured, candid, just, and reasonable of the whole set.' His being open to conviction in so material a point might perhaps be thought to render his removal necessary, to make room for a successor

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

who had no such 'compunctious visitings' of common sense or feeling.

The instructions of the English Ministers with regard to the treatment of the Emperor at St. Helena were dictated in that disgraceful spirit of vindictive meanness, which was to be expected in the circumstances and from the persons concerned. An English officer was to be constantly at the Emperor's table, so as to preclude the satisfaction of familiar conversation. This order was not carried into effect. An officer was also to accompany the Emperor in all his rides: this order was dispensed with within certain prescribed limits, because the Emperor had refused to ride out at all on such conditions. Almost every day brought with it some new cause of uneasiness and petty aggravation of his situation; and the motives assigned for these vexations, often assumed the appearance of irony. Thus sentinels were posted beneath the Emperor's windows and before his doors; and this (he was told) was for his own safety. The French were cut off from all free communication with the inhabitants of the island; they were put into a kind of close custody, and were assured that this was done to free the Emperor from all annoyance. The pass-words and orders were incessantly changed; so that those whom they concerned lived in continual perplexity and apprehension of being exposed to some unforeseen insult. Buonaparte addressed a complaint to the Admiral through M. Montholon. The answer explained the whole question. '*No such thing as an Emperor was known at St. Helena.*' No! Emperors and Kings are born and not made, ever since an Elector of Hanover was made King of England! From that period the two races of men and kings are supposed to go on in parallel and opposite lines forever; and it was for having made a breach in this order that Buonaparte was first to be hunted down and then made to feel his fall with every refinement of studied insult, to wipe out the stain of the unheard-of equality he had assumed with natural-born tyrants—or the chosen kings of a free people! In these circumstances, the only resource was in resignation, as satisfaction was placed beyond their reach. Las Cases is in doubt (from not having a sufficient knowledge of the royal mind) whether to address a direct complaint to the Prince-Regent would not have been to furnish a gratification to that Prince, as well as to convey a recommendation of him who had incurred their displeasure. In the midst of these altercations, the Admiral wished to introduce some ladies (who had arrived by the *Doris*) to the Emperor; but he refused, not liking this alternation of affronts and civilities. He however agreed to receive the officers of the 53rd regiment at the request of the colonel. After this officer took his leave, the Emperor prolonged his walk in the garden. He stopped awhile to look at

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

flower in one of the beds, and asked his companion if it was not a lily ? It was indeed a magnificent one. The thought that he had in his mind was obvious. He spoke of the number of times he had been wounded ; and said he had been imagined never to have been exposed to these sort of accidents from his having kept them secret as much as possible.

It was near the end of December. One day after a walk and a *tumble* in the mud, the Emperor returned and found a bundle of English newspapers, which the Grand-Marshal translated to him. This occupied him till late, and he forgot his dinner in discussing the contents. After dinner was served, Las Cases wished to continue the translation, but Napoleon would not let him proceed on account of the weak state of his eyes. 'We must wait till to-morrow !' he said. Such was his consideration for every one. The Admiral came in person to visit him ; and the interview took a very favourable turn. After some animated discussion, it was settled that the Emperor should henceforth ride freely about the island ; that the officer should follow him only at a distance : and that visitors should be admitted to the Emperor, not with the permission of the Admiral as the inspector of Longwood, but with that of the Grand-Marshal, who was to do the honours of the establishment. These concessions were presently recalled ; but their having been made in an unguarded moment was enough to shew that the Admiral was not a man fit for his place, any more than gyves are to be trusted to, which yield to the warm touch of the limbs which they are to gall and confine ! On the 30th of this month, Piontkowsky, a Pole, who had been left behind, but whose entreaties overcame the obduracy of the English government, joined the Emperor. On new-year's day, all their little party was assembled ; and Napoleon, entering into the feelings of the occasion, begged that they might breakfast and pass it together. This interest and complacency, still left for the smallest things, shewed how little the greatest had cost him !—Every day furnished some new trait of this kind ; but having given some idea of the Emperor's situation and of his general mode of life, which admitted of slight variation, it is necessary to hasten forward.

The English officer having insisted on accompanying Napoleon in his rides, in consequence of some new orders or of his own obstinacy, he gave up the exercise for some time, during which he was glad of any book to amuse himself with. 'Time,' he said, 'is the only thing of which we have too much here.' Among others, the collection called the *Antigallican* was thrown in his way, at which he laughed heartily. Las Cases observes, that the calumnies in this work were so gross and absurd, that with the exception of the most vulgar class of English, its poison carried its own antidote with it. It would be difficult on this

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

principle to say which was the most vulgar class of English society !— They heard by the papers successively of the insurrection in Spain and the death of Porlier, the execution of Ney and the escape of Lavalette. All these events interested Napoleon exceedingly, and he made a variety of remarks on them : he had by this time, with Las Cases's assistance, learnt to read a little in the English newspapers himself.

After some mixed conversation one evening, the Emperor enquired, 'What was the day of the month?' It was the 11th of March. 'Well,' said he, 'it is a year ago to-day; it was a brilliant day: I was at Lyons. I reviewed some troops; I had the Mayor to dine with me, who by the way has boasted since that it was the worst dinner he ever made in his life.' The Emperor became animated: he paced the chamber quickly. 'I was again become a great power,' he continued; and a sigh escaped him, which he immediately checked with these words, in an accent and with a warmth which it is difficult to describe:— 'I had founded the finest Empire upon earth, and I was so necessary to it, that spite of all my last reverses, here, upon my rock, I seem still to remain master of France. Look at what is going on there; read the papers; you will find it so in every line. Let me once more set my foot there: they will see what France and what I can do! What a fatality that my return from the Isle of Elba was not acquiesced in; that every one did not perceive that my reign was desirable and necessary to the balance and repose of Europe! But both kings and people feared me; they were wrong, and may pay dearly for it. I returned a new man; they could not believe it: they could not imagine that a man might have sufficient strength of mind to alter his character or to bend to the power of circumstances. I had, however, given proofs of this, and some pledges to the same effect. Who is ignorant that I am not a man of half-measures? I would have been as sincerely the Monarch of the Constitution and of peace as I had been of absolute sway and great enterprises. What could the kings apprehend? Did they still dread my ambition, my conquests, my universal monarchy? But my power and my resources were no longer the same; and besides, I had only defeated and conquered them in my own defence: this is a truth which time will more fully develop every day. *Europe never ceased to make war upon France, her principles, and me; and we were compelled to destroy, to save ourselves from destruction.* The Coalition always existed openly or secretly, avowed or denied; it was permanent: it only remained with the Allies to make peace: for ourselves, we were worn out; the French dreaded making new conquests. But even the French mistrusted me: they had the insanity to discuss when there was nothing to do but to fight; and to divide when they should have united on any terms. And was it not

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

better to run the risk of having me again for master, than to expose themselves to that of submitting to a foreign yoke? Would it not have been easier to rid themselves of a single tyrant than to shake off the chains of all the nations united? And whence did they derive this mistrust of me? Because they had already seen me concentrate every effort in myself, and direct them with a vigorous hand. But do they not learn at the present day to their cost, how necessary that was? Well! the danger was in any case the same: the contest terrible, and the crisis imminent. In this state of things, was not absolute power almost indispensable? The welfare of the country obliged me even to declare it openly on my return from Leipsic. I should have done so again on my return from Elba. I was wanting in consistency, or rather in confidence in the French, because many of them no longer placed it in me, and it was doing me a great wrong. If narrow and vulgar minds only saw in all my efforts the care of my own power, ought not those of greater scope to have known, that under the circumstances in which we were placed, my power and the country were but one? Did it require such great and incurable mischiefs to enable them to comprehend me? History will do me more justice: it will point me out as the man of self-denials and disinterestedness. To what temptations was I not exposed in the army of Italy? England offered me the crown of France at the time of the treaty of Amiens: I refused peace at Chatillon: I disdained all personal stipulations at Waterloo—and why? Because all this had no reference to my country, and I had no ambition distinct from her, that of her glory, her ascendancy, her majesty. And that is the reason why, in spite of so many calamities, I remain so popular in France. It is a sort of instinct of after-justice on their part.'

The Emperor asked whether, if he addressed a letter to the Prince-Regent, it would be forwarded? The Admiral replied, that it would be opened first; and on this condition the Emperor declined writing. Las Cases complains, among other things, that the animals sent them as food had often died a natural death. One day the discourse turning on the height and splendour of the Imperial power—'For all that,' interrupted Napoleon, 'Paris is so extensive and contains so many people of all sorts, and some so eccentric, that I can conceive there may be some who never saw me, and others who never even heard my name mentioned. Do you not think so?' And it was curious to observe with what whimsical ingenuity he maintained this assertion. All present loudly insisted that there was not a town or village in Europe, perhaps not even in the world, where his name had not been pronounced. One person in particular added—'Sire, before I returned to France at the treaty of Amiens, your Majesty being then only First Consul, I deter-

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

mined to make a tour in Wales, as one of the most extraordinary parts of Great Britain. I climbed the wildest mountains, some of them of prodigious height : I visited cabins that seemed to belong to another world. As I entered one of these secluded dwellings, I observed to my fellow-traveller, that in this spot one might expect to find repose and escape the din of revolution. The cottager suspecting us to be French from our accent, immediately inquired the news from France, and what Buonaparte, the First Consul, was about ?¹ 'Sire,' said another, 'we had the curiosity to ask the Chinese officers whether our European affairs had been heard of in their Empire ? "Certainly," they replied, "but in a confused manner, because we are totally uninterested in those matters ; but the name of your Emperor is famous there, and connected with grand ideas of revolution and conquest ; just as the names of those who have changed the face of that part of the world have arrived in ours, such as Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, and others."' So it is that single objects strike the mind at a distance from their height and elevation, and that the whole world is filled with the greatness and renown of an individual ! Bertrand, Las Cases, and the Emperor one day making a confession of their political faith, at the end of it, 'Well then,' exclaimed Napoleon, 'it seems I am the only one among you who has ever been a republican !'—Such were the *Diversions of St. Helena*.

CHAPTER LIX

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED

ON the 14th of April, 1816, the new Governor, Sir Hudson Lowe, arrived. It was not enough to provide Napoleon with a prison : it was thought necessary to be nice in the choice of a jailer. To judge how little any new restrictions or severities were required for the mere purposes of security, the following sketch of his situation may suffice.

A space of about twelve miles in circumference was allotted to Napoleon, within which he might ride or walk, without being accompanied by a British officer. Within this space was placed the camp of the 53rd at Deadwood, about a mile from Longwood-house, and another at Hut's-gate, opposite Bertrand's, close to whose door there

¹ In 1801, an old woman, living servant with a celebrated poet in Cumberland, had never heard of the French Revolution. The poet himself and his friends seem since to have forgotten that such an event had ever taken place.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

was an officer's-guard. A subaltern's-guard was posted at the entrance of Longwood, a few hundred paces from the house ; and a line of sentinels and piquets was placed round the limits. At nine o'clock the sentinels were drawn in, and stationed in communication with each other ; surrounding the house in such a manner that no person could come in or go out without being seen and scrutinized by them. At the entrance of the house, double sentinels were placed, and patrols were continually passing backward and forward. After nine, Napoleon was not at liberty to leave the house, unless in company with a field-officer ; and no person whatever was allowed to pass without the countersign. This state of affairs continued until day-light. Every landing-place in the island, and indeed every place which presented the semblance of one, was furnished with a piquet, and sentinels were even planted upon every *goat-path* leading to the sea, though in truth the obstacles presented by nature in almost all the paths in that direction would of themselves have proved insurmountable to so unwieldy a fugitive as Napoleon.

From the various signal-posts on the island, ships are frequently discovered at twenty-four leagues' distance, and always long before they can approach the shore. Two ships of war constantly cruised, one to windward and the other to leeward, to which signals were made the instant a vessel was discovered from the posts on shore. Every ship, except a British man-of-war, was accompanied down to the road by one of the cruizers, who remained with her until she was either permitted to anchor or was sent away. No foreign vessels were allowed to anchor, except under circumstances of great distress, in which case no one was permitted to land, and an officer and party from one of the ships of war was sent on board to take charge of them, and to prevent any improper communication. Every fishing-boat belonging to the island was numbered, and moored every evening at sunset under the superintendence of a lieutenant in the navy. No boats except guard-boats, which rowed about the island all night, were suffered to be out after sunset. The orderly-officer was also instructed to ascertain the actual presence of Napoleon twice within the twenty-four hours, which was done with as much delicacy as possible. In fact, every human precaution to prevent escape, short of actually incarcerating or chaining him, was adopted under Sir George Cockburn.

But this was not enough. The lines of circumvallation were drawn around him, from which he had no chance of escape ; but within them he retained his habitual good-humour, a freedom from interruption, and an appearance of outward ease and independence. This did not answer the desired object. It was therefore resolved to pass those lines ; to infix stings in the victim of jealousy and revenge ; and to

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

irritate and if possible drive him to some act of desperation by incessant petty annoyances and insults, to resent or to submit to which was equal indignity. Nothing could atone for the height to which Buonaparte had raised himself, but making him drink the cup of scorn and bitterness to the very dregs. It was not enough to make him a prisoner, unless he could at the same time be treated as a felon and a runaway slave. A man was picked out of the whole navy and army for this service, equally devoid of decency and humanity, and in whom the feeling of the insolence of office was happily seconded by a crawling servility. There was not a common English sailor or a drummer-boy that would not have shown more magnanimity and sense of justice than the English government and its chosen agent. But the mere rabble had never felt the galling contrast between merited and accidental elevation to supreme power and distinction. Or else the case was plain. Either there was nothing in Napoleon to make it necessary to take all these precautions against him as an object of dread and alarm to the whole world; and as if he alone, once at liberty and left to himself, were a match for all Europe in arms—or if he were that mighty and almost preternatural being, that wielded such power and whose name was a spell that worked miracles, then that very power and renown that rendered him formidable, ought (at least) to have screened him from being treated with ignominy and contempt.

As soon as Sir Hudson Lowe had landed, and had been installed governor in the customary forms, a message was sent to Longwood, that the new Governor would visit Napoleon at nine o'clock on the following morning. Accordingly, a little before nine, Sir Hudson Lowe arrived, in the midst of a pelting storm of wind and rain, accompanied by Sir George Cockburn and a numerous staff. As the hour fixed upon was unseasonable, and one at which Napoleon had never received any one, intimation was given that he was indisposed and could receive no visitors that morning. This appeared to disconcert Sir Hudson Lowe, who, after pacing up and down before the windows of the drawing-room for a few minutes, demanded at what hour on the following day he could be introduced? Two o'clock was fixed upon for the interview, at which time he arrived, accompanied as before by the Admiral and his staff. They were at first ushered into the dining-room, behind which was the saloon, where they were to be received. A proposal was made by Sir George Cockburn to Sir Hudson Lowe, that the latter should be introduced by him as the most official and proper manner of resigning the charge of his prisoner to him, for which purpose they should enter the room together. This was acceded to by Sir Hudson Lowe. At the door of the drawing-room stood Noverraz, one of the French valets, whose business it was

LIFE 'OF NAPOLEON

to announce the names of the persons introduced. After waiting a few minutes, the door was opened, and the governor called for. As soon as the word Governor was pronounced, Sir Hudson Lowe started up and stepped forward so hastily, that he entered the room before Sir George Cockburn was well apprised of his intention. The door was then closed; and when the Admiral presented himself, the valet, not having heard his name called, told him that he could not enter. Sir Hudson Lowe remained about a quarter of an hour with Napoleon, during which time the conversation was carried on in Italian; and subsequently the officers of his staff were introduced. The Admiral did not again apply for admittance.

The day after, Mr. O'Meara, who had been retained as his surgeon from the time he had left the *Bellerophon* (at the Emperor's own request) took him some newspapers which had been lent him by the Admiral. Napoleon said, 'I believe that he was rather ill-treated when he came up with the new Governor: what does he say about it?' The reply was, that the Admiral conceived it to be an insult and felt greatly offended, though some explanation had been given by General Montholon on the subject. Napoleon answered, 'He should have sent me word that he wanted to see me; but he wished to embroil me with the new Governor, and for that purpose persuaded him to come up here at nine o'clock in the morning, though he well knew that I had never received any persons, nor ever would, at that hour.' He continued: 'I, in my misfortunes, sought an asylum among you; and instead of that, I have found contempt, ill-treatment, and insult. Shortly after I came on board his ship, as I did not wish to sit at table for two or three hours, guzzling down wine to make myself drunk, I rose from the table, and walked out upon deck. While I was going out, he said in a contemptuous manner, "I believe the *General* has never read Lord Chesterfield:" meaning that I was deficient in politeness, and did not know how to conduct myself at table. If Sir George had wanted to see Lord St. Vincent or Lord Keith, would he not have sent beforehand, and asked at what hour it might be convenient to see them? And should not I be treated with at least as much respect as either of these? Putting out of the question, that I have been a crowned head, I think,' said he, laughing, 'that the actions I have performed are at least as well-known as any thing they have done.'

General Montholon came in at this moment with a paper sent by Sir Hudson Lowe, which the servants were required to sign, such being the pleasure of the Prince-Regent. The improved system of domiciliary visits and annoyance under the new Governor, began from the first instant. Napoleon's faithful domestics were told that they might return to Europe, as if he kept them with him against their will;

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

or if they did not choose to detach themselves from him, they were to be frightened into it by being compelled to sign a declaration that they were ready to remain under the new and more severe restrictions which were about to be imposed upon them. They, however, all signed the paper; but Sir Hudson, not satisfied with the success of his experiment, insisted on seeing them himself, to know whether M. Montholon had not played him a trick. The next thing was that Mr. Brook, the colonial secretary, Major Gorrequer, Sir Hudson's aide-de-camp, and other official persons went round to the different shop-keepers in the town, ordering them in the name of the Governor, not to give credit to any of the French or to sell them any article, unless for ready money, under pain of not only losing the amount of the sum so credited, but of suffering such other punishment as the Governor might think fit to award. They were further directed to hold no communication whatever with them without special permission from the new Governor, under pain of being turned off the island.

Many of the officers of the 53rd, who were in the habit of calling on Madame Bertrand at Hut's-Gate, received hints that their visits were not pleasing to the authorities lately arrived; and the officer of the Hut's-Gate guard was ordered to report the names of all persons entering Bertrand's house. Sentinels were placed in different directions to prevent the approach of visitors, several of whom, including some ladies, were turned back. A sense of reluctance or rather fear to associate with the exiles, very different from the feeling which existed a few days before, appeared to become pretty general among the inhabitants. Several of the officers of the 53rd went to Hut's-Gate to take leave of Countess Bertrand, as they declared the impossibility there was for men of honour to comply with the new regulations. It was expected and required that all persons who visited at Longwood or at Hut's-Gate should make a report to the Governor or to Sir Thomas Reade of the conversations they had held with the French. Several additional sentinels were posted around Longwood House and grounds. What was all this for? Not for the better security of Buonaparte's person, but to prevent a report from getting abroad in Europe and from wounding the ear of princes, that he was not either in temper or manners the monster we had described him.

The weather was extremely wet and foggy (with high winds) for several days, during which Napoleon did not stir out of doors. Messengers and letters continually succeeded one another from Plantation-house. The Governor was apparently very anxious to see Napoleon, and evidently distrustful, although the residents at Longwood were assured of his actual presence by the sound of his voice.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

He had some communications with Count Bertrand on the necessity which he said there was, that some of his officers should see Napoleon daily. He also came to Longwood frequently himself, and finally, after some difficulty, succeeded in obtaining an interview with Napoleon in his bed-chamber, which lasted about a quarter of an hour. Some days before, he sent for Mr. O'Meara, asked a variety of questions concerning the captive; walked round the house several times and before the windows, measuring and laying down the plan of a new ditch, which he said he would have dug *in order to prevent the cattle from trespassing*. On his arrival at the angle formed by the meeting of two of the old ditches, he observed a tree, the branches of which considerably overhung it. This appeared to excite serious alarm in his Excellency's breast, as he desired Mr. O'Meara to send instantly for Mr. Porteous, the superintendant of the Company's gardens. A few minutes after the messenger was despatched, the Governor who had his eyes constantly fixed upon the tree, desired Mr. O'Meara in a hasty manner to go and fetch Mr. Porteous immediately himself. On his return, he found Sir Hudson Lowe walking up and down, contemplating the object which appeared to be such a source of alarm to him. In a hurried manner, he ordered Mr. Porteous to send some workmen instantly to have the tree grubbed up; and before leaving the ground, directed Mr. O'Meara in an under-tone to see that 'it was done.' After this commencement, we need not wonder at the sequel. We have here an invaluable description of the wrong side of an Englishman's character. He sees bug-bears and objects of suspicion in every thing: of these he is bent to make the worst; and there is no real evil which he will not undergo or inflict upon others, to get rid of the wilful phantoms he conjures up, or rather to furnish food for his habitual gloom and terrors. This account (as far as it goes) seems to bring Sir Hudson Lowe within a known class again, and not to make him out a *lusus naturæ*, in point of wanton cruelty and meanness. What follows is of a piece. On the 4th of May, Sir Hudson Lowe went to see Count Bertrand, with whom he had a long conversation, which did not appear to be of a nature very pleasing to him, as on retiring he mounted his horse, muttering something and evidently out of humour. He had told the Count, that the French made a great many complaints without any reason; that considering their situation, they were very well treated, and ought to be thankful instead of making complaints and abusing the liberal conduct which was practised towards them. This is the true English character, which does not consist so much of passion or malice, as of headstrong self-will, which makes us do whatever we please, and of insensibility to the feelings of others, which makes us think whatever we do is right; and the more wrong it is, the more we

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

are convinced of the truth and justice of the grounds on which we have acted, and the unreasonableness of others in not becoming parties to their own condemnation.

On the 5th, Napoleon sent for his surgeon to come to him about nine o'clock. He was introduced into his bed-chamber, a description of which is worth giving here. It was about fourteen feet by twelve, and ten or eleven feet in height. The walls were lined with brown nankeen, bordered and edged with common green bordering-paper, and destitute of surbase. Two small windows, without pullies, looked towards the camp of the 53rd regiment, one of which was thrown up and fastened by a piece of notched wood. There were window-curtains of white long-cloth, a small fire-place, a shabby grate and fire-irons to match, with a paltry mantel-piece of wood, painted white, upon which stood a small marble bust of his son. Above the mantel-piece hung the portrait of Maria-Louisa, and four or five of young Napoleon, one of which was embroidered by the hands of his mother. A little more to the right hung also the portrait of the Empress Josephine; and to the left was suspended the alarm chamber-watch of Frederic the Great, obtained by Napoleon at Potsdam; while on the right, the Consular watch, engraved with the cypher B, hung by a chain of the plaited hair of Maria-Louisa, from a pin stuck in the nankeen lining. The floor was covered with a second-hand carpet, which had once decorated the dining-room of a lieutenant of the St. Helena artillery. In the right-hand corner was placed the little plain iron camp-bedstead, with green silk-curtains, on which its master had reposed on the fields of Marengo and Austerlitz. Between the windows there was a paltry second-hand chest of drawers; and an old book-case with green blinds stood on the left of the door leading to the next apartment. Four or five cane-bottomed chairs painted green were standing here and there about the room. Before the back-door there was a screen covered with nankeen; and between that and the fire-place, an old-fashioned sofa covered with white long-cloth, on which Napoleon reclined, dressed in his white morning-gown, white loose trowsers and stockings all in one, a chequered red handkerchief upon his head, and his shirt collar open without a cravat. His air was melancholy and troubled. Before him stood a little round table, with some books, at the foot of which lay in confusion upon the carpet a heap of those which he had already perused, and at the opposite side of the sofa was suspended Isabey's portrait of the Empress Maria-Louisa, holding her son in her arms. In front of the fire-place stood Las Cases with his arms folded over his breast and some papers in one of his hands. Of all the former magnificence of the once mighty Emperor of France, nothing remained but a superb washhand-stand containing a silver basin and water-jug of the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

same metal, in the left-hand corner. The object of Napoleon in sending for O'Meara on this occasion was to question him whether in their future intercourse he was to consider him in the light of a spy and a tool of the Governor or as his physician? The Doctor gave a decided and satisfactory answer on this point, and it was for adhering to his resolution in spite of the tampering and threats that were used to influence him, that he was afterwards dismissed the island in disgrace—'Dishonour honourable!' Napoleon continued: 'During the short interview that this Governor had with me in my bed-chamber, one of the first things he proposed was to send you away' (to O'Meara), 'and that I should take his own surgeon in your place. This he repeated twice, and so earnest was he to gain his object, that though I gave him a flat refusal, when he was going out he turned about and again proposed it.' [This in an Italian would point to a doubtful conclusion: in an Englishman it was merely pertinacity and want of feeling.] 'I never,' added the Emperor, 'saw such a horrid countenance. He sat on a chair opposite the sofa, and on the little table between us there was a cup of coffee. His physiognomy made such an unfavourable impression on me that I fancied his looks had poisoned it, and I ordered Marchand to throw it out of the window: I could not have swallowed it on any account.' Las Cases, who probably was not prejudiced in his favour, describes Sir Hudson as of the middle height, thin, red-haired, with large white bushy eye-brows, a sinister look, and freckled.

On the 11th, a proclamation was issued by the Governor, 'forbidding any persons on the island from sending letters to or receiving them from General Buonaparte or his suite, on pain of being immediately arrested and dealt with accordingly.' This had never been done in the former Governor's time, though Sir Hudson pretended that he changed nothing. This prohibition could not be one of policy—for no one would think of conveying improper intelligence by letters which any one might open—it was to aggravate and irritate, which was Sir Hudson's mission. Nothing escaped his importunity and desire to interfere and show his power, whether in official or other matters. 'The Governor,' said Napoleon, 'has just sent an invitation to Bertrand for General Buonaparte to come to Plantation-House to meet Lady Moira. I told Bertrand to return no answer to it. If he really wanted me to see her, he would have put Plantation-House within the limits; but to send such an invitation, knowing I must go in charge of a guard if I wished to avail myself of it, was an insult.—It appears,' added he, 'that this Governor was with Blucher, and is the writer of some dispatches to his government descriptive of part of the operations in 1814. I pointed them out to him the last time I saw him; and asked him, "Is that you, Sir?" He replied, *Yes*. I told him they

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

were full of misrepresentations and nonsense. He shrugged up his shoulders, appeared confused, and said, "I thought I saw all that." If those letters were the only accounts he transmitted, he betrayed his country.' A few days after, in consequence of another visit from the Governor, he expressed himself thus—'Here has been this ill-favoured wretch to torment me again. Tell him that I never want to see him, and that I hope he may not come again to annoy me with his hateful presence, unless it be with orders to dispatch me. He will then find my breast ready for the blow; but till then, let me be rid of his odious countenance: I cannot reconcile myself to it.' Buonaparte's aversion to this man appears to have been instinctive, and as just as it was involuntary.

From this time the whole of his intercourse with the Governor and his agents was nothing but a series of petty affronts, carried more and more into outrage as the irritation increased, or of ineffectual remonstrances against compulsory submission to them. 'Your government,' said he, 'are mistaken, if they imagine that by seeking every means to distress me, such as sending me here, depriving me of all communication with my nearest and dearest relatives, so that I am ignorant if one of my blood exist, isolating me from the world, imposing useless and vexatious restrictions which are daily getting worse, sending out the dregs of mankind as keepers, they will weary out my patience, and drive me to commit suicide. Even if I ever had entertained a thought of the kind, the idea of the gratification it would afford them would prevent me from completing it. And then that *palace*,' he added, laughing, 'which they say they are sending out for me, is so much money thrown into the sea. I would much rather they had sent me four of five hundred volumes of books than all their furniture and houses. Besides, it will take some years to build it; and before that time, I shall be no more.'—

Napoleon, notwithstanding, from the elasticity and buoyancy of his spirits, soon recovered his gaiety when out of the presence of his tormentor, and enquired after the news and other matters as usual. He was informed that some ladies he had received a few days before were highly delighted with his manners; especially as from what they had read and heard, they had been prepossessed with a very different opinion. 'Ah!' said he, laughing, 'I suppose they imagined I was some ferocious horned animal.' It was this re-action of opinion, which Ministers dreaded; and they therefore set a person over him, who would persist in the original prejudice, with meanness and malice to boot, in spite of the evidence of his senses. Soon after came the *Declaration of the Allies* and the *Acts of Parliament*, authorising the detention of Napoleon Buonaparte as a prisoner of war and disturber of the peace of Europe.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

Against the bill when brought into the House of Lords, there were two protests, those of Lord Holland and of the Duke of Sussex. These official documents did not tend to soothe the temper or raise the spirits of the French to endure the petty insults and harassing privations of their jailer, who seemed to think it his duty not only to confine their persons, but to circumscribe their comforts; to grudge them the smallest interval of ease, and to suppose that a moment's oblivion of their sufferings or situation was a crime equally in him and in themselves. It is peculiar to the English to consider *their* enemies as self-convicted criminals. Among other instances of his vulgar assumption and want of decorum, he refused to forward a political pamphlet, because it was addressed '*To Napoleon the Great*;' ¹ when a complaint was made of the want of trees at Longwood, he jeeringly said 'he would plant some;' and declared that 'he thought Aly Pacha a more respectable scoundrel than General Buonaparte.' Having afforded a clue to the principle, I shall avoid the details as much as I can, though they will forever remain a stain upon English history and on the English character, which cannot be excused from having had its full share in them. The Emperor had not only the impertinence and injustice of the English to endure, but the misgivings and unmanageable humours of his own people to contend with. As men are apt in such circumstances, they sometimes disagreed among themselves; and part of their petulance and ill-temper fell upon their chief. He took these little incidents deeply to heart. On one occasion, he said in bitterness, 'I know that I am fallen; but to feel this among you! I am aware that man is frequently unreasonable and susceptible of offence. Thus, when I am mistrustful of myself, I ask, Should I have been treated so at the Thuilleries? This is my sure test.' How well all his words and actions seem to accord with the expression of that fine marble bust, that vies in grandeur and simplicity with those of the great men handed down to us from antiquity!

To the *Declaration of the Allies* he desired Montholon to give the following masterly reply:—

OFFICIAL DOCUMENT

'GENERAL,—I have received the treaty of the 2nd of August, 1815, concluded between his Britannic Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Prussia, which was annexed to your letter of the 23d of July.

¹ Sir Hudson alleged as a reason for keeping back the work, that something was said in it against Lord Castlereagh. On the same principle, he was only allowed a sight of the *Times* and those English newspapers in which he was abused. The *Edinburgh Review* was carefully kept out of his way.

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

‘ The Emperor Napoleon protests against the purport of that treaty ; he is not the prisoner of England. After having placed his Abdication in the hands of the representatives of the nation, for the benefit of the Constitution adopted by the French people, and in favour of his son, he proceeded voluntarily and freely to England, for the purpose of residing there, as a private person, in retirement, under the protection of the British laws. The violation of all laws cannot constitute a right in fact. The person of the Emperor Napoleon is in the power of England ; but neither, as a matter of fact, nor of right, has it been, or is it, at present, in the power of Austria, Russia, and Prussia ; even according to the laws and customs of England, which has never included, in its exchange of prisoners, Russians, Austrians, Prussians, Spaniards, or Portuguese, although united to these powers by treaties of alliance, and making war conjointly with them. The Convention of the 2d of August, made fifteen days after the Emperor Napoleon had arrived in England, cannot, as a matter of right, have any effect ; it merely presents the spectacle of the Coalition of the four principal powers of Europe, for the oppression of a single man ; a Coalition which the opinion of every people disavows, as do all the principles of sound morality. The Emperors of Austria and Russia, and the King of Prussia not possessing, either in fact or by right, any power over the person of the Emperor Napoleon, were incapable of enacting any thing with regard to him. If the Emperor Napoleon had been in the power of the Emperor of Austria, that prince would have remembered the relations formed by religion and nature between a father and a son, relations which are never violated with impunity. He would have remembered that four times Napoleon re-established him on his throne ; at Leoben in 1797, and at Luneville in 1801, when his armies were under the walls of Vienna ; at Presburgh in 1806, and at Vienna in 1809, when his armies were in possession of the capital and of three-fourths of the monarchy. That prince would have remembered the protestations which he made to him at the bivouac of Moravia in 1806, and at the interview at Dresden in 1812. If the person of the Emperor Napoleon had been in the power of the Emperor Alexander, he would have remembered the ties of friendship, contracted at Tilsit, at Erfurt, and during twelve years of daily intercourse ; he would have remembered the conduct of the Emperor Napoleon the day subsequent to the battle of Austerlitz, when having it in his power to take him prisoner with the remains of his army, he contented himself with his word, and let him effect his retreat ; he would have remembered the dangers to which the Emperor Napoleon personally exposed himself to extinguish the fire of Moscow and preserve that capital for him ; unquestionably that prince would not have violated the duties of friendship and gratitude

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

towards a friend in distress. If the person of the Emperor Napoleon had been even in the power of the King of Prussia, that sovereign would not have forgotten that it was optional with the Emperor, after the battle of Friedland, to place another prince on the throne of Berlin; he would not have forgotten, in the presence of a disarmed enemy, the protestations of devotedness and the sentiments which he expressed to him in 1812, at the interviews at Dresden. It is accordingly evident from the 2d and 5th articles of the said treaty, that being incapable of any influence whatever over the fate and the person of the Emperor Napoleon, who is not in their power, these princes refer themselves in that respect to the future conduct of his Britannic Majesty, who undertakes to fulfil all obligations.

‘These princes have reproached the Emperor Napoleon with preferring the protection of the English laws to theirs. The false ideas which the Emperor Napoleon entertained of the liberality of the English laws and of the influence of a great, generous, and free people on its government, decided him in preferring the protection of these laws to that of his father-in-law, or of his old friend. The Emperor Napoleon always would have been able to obtain the security of what related personally to himself, whether by placing himself again at the head of the army of the Loire, or by putting himself at the head of the army of the Gironde, commanded by General Clauzel; but looking for the future only to retirement and to the protection of the laws of a free nation, either English or American, all stipulations appeared useless to him. He thought, that the English people would have been more bound by his frank conduct, which was noble and full of confidence, than it could have been by the most solemn treaties. He has been deceived; but this delusion will forever excite the indignation of real Britons, and with the present as well as future generations, it will be a proof of the perfidy of the English administration. Austrian and Russian commissioners are arrived at Saint Helena; if the object of their mission be to fulfil part of the duties, which the Emperors of Austria and Russia have contracted by the treaty of the 2d of August, and to take care, that the English agents, in a small colony, in the middle of the ocean, do not fail in the attentions due to a prince, connected with them by the ties of affinity and by so many relations, the characteristics of these two sovereigns will be recognised in that measure. But you, Sir, have asserted that these commissioners possessed neither the right nor the power of giving any opinion on whatever may be transacted on this rock.

‘The English ministry have caused the Emperor Napoleon to be transported to Saint Helena, two thousand leagues from Europe. This rock, situated under the tropic at the distance of five hundred

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

leagues from every kind of Continent, is, in that latitude, exposed to a devouring heat ; it is, during three-fourths of the year, covered with clouds and mists ; it is at once the driest and wettest country in the world. This is the most injurious climate to the Emperor's health. It is hatred which dictated the selection of this residence as well as the instructions, given by the English ministry to the officers, who command in this country ; they have been ordered to call the Emperor Napoleon General, being desirous of compelling him to acknowledge, that he never reigned in France, which decided him not to take an incognito title, as he had determined, on quitting France. First Magistrate for life, under the title of First-Consul, he concluded the preliminaries of London and the treaty of Amiens with the King of Great-Britain. He received as ambassadors, Lord Cornwallis, Mr. Merry, and Lord Whitworth, who resided in that quality at his court. He sent to the King of England, Count Otto and General Andreossi, who resided as ambassadors at the court of Windsor. When, after the exchange of letters between the ministers for foreign affairs belonging to the two monarchies, Lord Lauderdale came to Paris, provided with full powers from the King of England, he treated with the plenipotentiaries provided with full powers from the Emperor Napoleon, and resided several months at the court of the Thuilleries. When afterwards, at Chatillon Lord Castlereagh signed the ultimatum which the allied powers presented to the plenipotentiaries of the Emperor Napoleon, he thereby recognized the fourth dynasty. That ultimatum was more advantageous than the treaty of Paris ; but France was required to renounce Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine, which was contrary to the propositions of Frankfort and to the proclamations of the allied powers ; and was also contrary to the oath by which, at his consecration, the Emperor had sworn the integrity of the Empire. The Emperor then thought these national limits were necessary to the security of France as well as to the equilibrium of Europe ; he thought that the French nation, in the circumstances under which she found herself, ought rather to risk every chance of war than to give them up. France would have obtained that integrity, and with it preserved her honour, had not treason contributed to the success of the allies. The treaty of the 2d of August and the bill of the British Parliament style the Emperor, Napoleon Buonaparte, and give him only the title of General. The title of *General Buonaparte* is, no doubt, eminently glorious ; the Emperor bore it at Lodi, at Castiglione, at Rivoli, at Arcole, at Leoben, at the Pyramids, at Aboukir ; but for seventeen years he has borne that of First-Consul and of Emperor ; it would be an admission, that he has been neither first magistrate of the republic, nor sovereign of the fourth dynasty. Those who think that nations are flocks, which, by

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

divine right, belong to some families, are neither of the present age, nor of the spirit of the English legislature, which has several times changed the succession of its dynasties, because the great alterations occasioned by opinions, in which the reigning princes did not participate, had made them enemies to the happiness of the great majority of that nation. For kings are but hereditary magistrates, who exist for the happiness of nations, and not nations for the satisfaction of kings. It is the same spirit of hatred, which directed that the Emperor Napoleon should not write nor receive any letter without its being opened and read by the English ministers and the officers of Saint Helena. He has, by that regulation, been interdicted the possibility of receiving intelligence from his mother, his wife, his son, his brothers; and when, wishing to free himself from the inconvenience of having his letters read by inferior officers, he desired to send sealed letters to the Prince-Regent, he was told, that open letters only could be taken charge of and conveyed, and that such were the instructions of the ministry. That measure stands in need of no comment; it will suggest strange ideas of the spirit of the administration by which it was dictated; it would be disclaimed even at Algiers! Letters have been received for general officers in the Emperor's suite; they were opened and delivered to you; you have retained them, because they had not been transmitted through the medium of the English ministry; it was found necessary to make them travel four thousand leagues over again, and these officers had the misfortune to know, that there existed on this rock news from their wives, their mothers, and their children, and that they could not be put in possession of it in less than six months!—The heart revolts. Permission could not be obtained to subscribe to the *Morning Chronicle*, to the *Morning Post*, or to some French journals; some broken numbers of the *Times* have been occasionally sent to Longwood. In consequence of the demand made on board of the *Northumberland*, some books have been sent; but all those which relate to the transactions of late years, have been carefully kept back. It was since intended to open a correspondence with a London bookseller for the purpose of being directly supplied with books which might be wanted, and with those relative to the events of the day; that intention was frustrated. An English author having published in London an account of his travels in France, took the trouble to send it as a present to the Emperor, but you did not think yourself authorized to deliver it to him, because it had not reached you through the channel of your government. It is also said, that other books, sent by the authors, have not been delivered, because the address of some was—*To the Emperor Napoleon*, and of others—*To Napoleon the Great*. The English ministry are not authorized to order any of these vexations. The law,

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

however unjust, considers the Emperor Napoleon as a prisoner of war ; but prisoners of war have never been prohibited from subscribing to the journals, or receiving books that are printed ; such a prohibition is exercised only in the dungeons of the Inquisition.

‘ The island of St. Helena is ten leagues in circumference ; it is every where inaccessible ; the coast is guarded by brigs, posts within sight of each other are placed on the shore, and all communication with the sea is rendered impracticable. There is but one small town, James-Town, where the vessels anchor, and from which they sail. In order to prevent the escape of an individual, it is sufficient to guard the coast by land and sea. By interdicting the interior of the island, one object only can be in view, that of preventing a ride of eight or ten miles, which it would be possible to take on horseback, and the privation of which, according to the consultations of medical men, is abridging the Emperor’s days.

‘ The Emperor has been placed at Longwood, which is exposed to every wind ; a barren piece of ground, uninhabited, without water, and incapable of any kind of cultivation. The space contains about twelve hundred uncultivated fathoms. At the distance of eleven or twelve hundred fathoms, a camp was established on a small eminence ; another has been since placed nearly at the same distance in an opposite direction, so that in the intense heat of the tropic, whatever way the eye is directed, nothing is seen but encampments. Admiral Malcolm, perceiving the utility of which a tent would be to the Emperor in that situation, has had one pitched by his seamen at the distance of twenty paces from the house ; it is the only spot in which shade is to be found. The Emperor has, however, every reason to be satisfied with the spirit which animates the officers and soldiers of the gallant 53d, as he had been with the crew of the Northumberland. Longwood-House was constructed to serve as a barn to the Company’s farm ; some apartments were afterwards made in it by the Deputy-Governor of the island ; he used it for a country-house ; but it was in no respect adapted for a residence. During the year it has been inhabited, it has been always in want of repair, and the Emperor has been constantly exposed to the inconvenience and unwholesomeness of a house in which workmen are employed. His bedchamber is too small to contain a bedstead of ordinary size ; but every kind of building at Longwood would prolong the inconvenience arising from the workmen being employed. There are, however, in this wretched island, some beautiful situations, with fine trees, gardens, and tolerably good houses, among others Plantation-House ; but you are prevented by the positive instructions of the ministry from granting this house, which would have saved a great deal of expense laid out in building, at Longwood, huts covered with

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

pitched paper, which are no longer of any use. You have prohibited every kind of intercourse between us and the inhabitants of the island ; you have, in fact, converted Longwood-House into a secret prison ; you have even thrown difficulties in the way of our communication with the officers of the garrison. The most anxious care would seem to be taken to deprive us of the few resources afforded by this miserable country, and we are no better off here than we should be on Ascension Rock. During the four months you have been at St. Helena, you have, Sir, rendered the Emperor's condition worse. It was observed to you by Count Bertrand, that you violated the law of your legislature, that you trampled upon the privileges of general officers, prisoners of war. You answered, that you knew nothing but the letter of your instructions, and that they were still worse than your conduct appeared to us.

‘ I have the honour, &c. &c.

(Signed)

‘ COUNT DE MONTHOLON.

‘ P.S. I had, Sir, signed this letter, when I received yours of the 17th, to which you annex the estimate of an annual sum of 20,000*l.* sterling, which you consider indispensable to meet the expenses of the establishment of Longwood, after having made all the reductions which you have thought possible. The consideration of this estimate can, in no respect, concern us ; the Emperor's table is scarcely supplied with what is necessary ; all the provisions are of a bad quality and four times dearer than at Paris. You require a fund of twelve thousand pounds sterling from the Emperor, as your government only allows you eight thousand pounds for all these expences. I have had the honour of telling you, that the Emperor had no funds ; that no letter had been received or written for a year, and that he was altogether unacquainted with what is passing or what may have passed in Europe. Transplanted by violence to this rock, at the distance of two thousand leagues, without being able to receive or to write any letter, he now finds himself at the discretion of the English agents. The Emperor has uniformly desired and still desires to provide himself for all his expences of every nature, and he will do so, as speedily as you shall give possibility to the means, by taking off the prohibition laid upon the merchants of the island, of carrying on his correspondence, and releasing it from all kind of inquisition on your part or on that of any of your agents. The moment the Emperor's wants shall be known in Europe, the persons who interest themselves for him will transmit the necessary funds for his supplies.

‘ The letter of Lord Bathurst, which you have communicated to me, gives rise to strange ideas ! Can your ministers then be so ignorant as not to know, that the spectacle of a great man struggling with adversity

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

is the most sublime of spectacles? Can they be ignorant, that Napoleon at Saint Helena, in the midst of persecutions of every kind, against which his serenity is his only shield, is greater, more sacred, more venerable, than on the first throne of the world, where he was so long the arbiter of kings? Those who fail in respect to Napoleon, thus situated, merely degrade their own character and the nation which they represent !’

Admiral Malcolm brought out some books for the Emperor, which had been ordered at Madeira : he was overjoyed at receiving them, and assisted in unpacking the cases himself. He was also much pleased with the countenance and manners of the new Admiral. The four Allied Commissioners arrived at the same time. Montchenu, the French Commissioner, was an old French emigrant, at whom Napoleon laughed a good deal. Madame Bertrand wanted to see him, to enquire after her mother’s health, and Las Cases after that of his wife, as he had seen both a little before his departure from Paris ; but Sir Hudson Lowe would not permit it. Captain Hamilton took leave on his return to England, and was addressed by Napoleon in these words :— ‘ Your government desire to know what I want : tell them I demand my liberty or death.’ A great deal of *fuss* was now made about the reduction of the expences of the household. Napoleon said,— ‘ I cannot understand this : your ministers go to an expence of sixty or seventy thousand pounds to send me out houses and furniture, which I do not want ; and yet grudge me a bottle of wine, and want to starve my servants. If necessary, I will go and mess with the 53rd regiment : there is not a soldier among them that would refuse me a share of his rations.’ Soon after, these privations and vexations not having been taken in good part, other restrictions were imposed of a still more irksome and disgraceful nature (for it is our way to clench one wrong by a greater), such as that the Emperor should be prohibited ‘ from going off the high-road ; from going on the path leading to Miss Mason’s ; from entering into any house, and from conversing with any person whom he might meet in his rides or walks.’ The Governor afterwards said, that this last intimation was meant as a civility, lest he should be stopped by one of the orderlies in the midst of a conversation which might appear too long and growing dangerous. This interpretation was much approved of by Sir Thomas Reade. The same person, when Buonaparte declined receiving the visit of Sir Thomas Strange, remarked,— ‘ If I were governor, I’ll be d—d if I would not make him feel that he was a prisoner. If he did not comply with what I wanted, I’ll be d—d if I would not take his books from him, which I’ll advise the Governor to do. He is a d—d outlaw and

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

prisoner ; and the Governor has a right to treat him with as much severity as he likes, and nobody has any business to interfere with him in the execution of his duty.' Any thing more characteristic than this speech was never put together. Oaths, malignity, meanness, abuse, right, and duty are blended in as fine a confusion as one could wish. Such were the persons sent out to represent the boasted heroism and generosity of the English nation and government !

The next piece of refinement was the requiring all the officers and domestics belonging to the Emperor's suite to sign a paper conforming to the new regulations ; followed by a determination to send them off the island, because, though they readily subscribed to the conditions, they insisted on substituting the words ' the Emperor Napoleon ' for ' Napoleon Buonaparte,' in speaking of their great master. Sir Hudson congratulated himself on this dilemma ; and said it was a trick which they were glad to avail themselves of, to get sent back. When they found that this threat was seriously meant to be put in execution, they all signed Sir Hudson's shiboleth, except one of the domestics,¹ Santini. Napoleon, to avoid similar difficulties in future, offered (as he had formerly intended) to take the name of Meuron or Duroc. But nothing was ever done about it, as it would have deprived the Governor of one of the sources of ill-blood and litigation between them. In answer to an observation, that many were surprised at his having retained the title after his Abdication, he said, ' I abdicated the throne of France, but not the title of Emperor. I do not call myself Napoleon, Emperor of France, but the Emperor Napoleon. Sovereigns generally retain their titles. Thus Charles IV. of Spain retains the title of King and Majesty, after having abdicated in favour of his son. If I were in England, I would not call myself Emperor. But they want to make it appear that the French nation had no right to choose me as its sovereign. If they had not a right to make me Emperor, they were equally incapable of making me General. Your nation,' continued he, ' called Washington a leader of rebels for a long time, and refused to acknowledge either him or the Constitution of his country : but his successes obliged them to change their tone, and acknowledge both. It is success which makes the great man. It would appear truly ridiculous in me, were it not that your ministers force me to it, to call myself Emperor, situated as I am here ; and would remind one of those poor wretches in Bedlam, who fancy themselves kings amidst their chains and straw.'

The answer which he gave about this period to a question put to

¹ He was a Corsican, and in his moody fits, professed a determination to shoot the Governor, from which he was with some difficulty dissuaded. He was afterwards sent off the island.

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

him by Mr. O'Meara is admirable, and may relieve the nauseous detail of official cruelty and chicane. It being remarked that it had excited considerable surprise that during the height of his glory he had never given a Dukedom in France to any person, he replied—'Because it would have produced great discontent among the people. If for example I had made one of my marshals Duke of Burgundy, instead of giving him a title derived from one of my victories, it would have excited great alarm in Burgundy, as they would conceive that some feudal rights and territory were attached to the title; and the nation hated the old nobility so much, that the creation of any rank resembling them would have given universal umbrage, which I, powerful as I was, durst not venture upon. I instituted the new nobility to crush the old, and to satisfy the people, as the greater part of those I created had sprung from themselves, and every private soldier had a right to look up to the title of Duke. I believe that I acted wrong in doing even this, as it impaired the system of equality, which pleased the people so much; but if I had created Dukes with a French title, it would have been considered as a revival of the old feudal privileges, with which the nation had been cursed so long.'

Even the Allied Commissioners were scandalized at the conduct of the English Governor; and expressed great dissatisfaction at not having yet seen Napoleon. Count Balmaine in particular observed, that they appeared to be objects of suspicion: that had he been aware of the manner in which they would be treated, he would not have come out. That the Emperor Alexander had great interest in preventing the escape of Napoleon, but that he wished him to be well treated and with the respect due to him; for which reason he (Count Balmaine) had only asked to see him as a private person, and not officially as a commissioner. That they should be the objects of ridicule in Europe, as soon as it was known they had been so many months at St. Helena, without ever once seeing the individual, to ascertain whose presence was the sole object of their mission. That the Governor always replied to their questions, that Buonaparte had refused to receive any persons whatever. The botanist, a man of science, who had come out with them, held similar language, and remarked, that Longwood was the vilest abode in the world, and in his opinion the worst part of the island.

The Imperial plate was now sold in parcels, to procure provisions; the wine was so bad that it seemed to have been poisoned; but Sir Thomas Reade declared, that as it had been sent out for his use, General Buonaparte was bound to drink it. Four of the servants, with the Pole, Piontkowsky, were sent away to save expence and add a new indignity; and it being represented to Sir Hudson Lowe, that in

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

consequence of his confinement to the house and so many harassing circumstances, the health of the Emperor declined, he pretended at first to take off the restrictions which kept Buonaparte within doors, said the sentinels had no right to stop him ; then that the orders which had been given to that effect had been recalled, neither of which was true ; and the whole object of this insidious show of indulgence and barefaced tissue of falsehoods seemed to be, to get Buonaparte collared and perhaps struck down by one of the private soldiers, so that the question might be brought to a violent issue, or that he might refuse ever to stir out of his room again. Sir Hudson Lowe acknowledged to O'Meara, that his appointment had another object in view besides the securing Buonaparte's person. What this object was, he did not say, nor was it (according to his statement) entrusted to his Majesty's Government in general : he only communicated on the subject with Lord Bathurst, who probably communicated with Mr. Croker, who might communicate with some higher person. Is it allowed to guess what this object was ? It was to reverse (if it were possible) the perspective of time and history ; to degrade Buonaparte in his own eyes and in those of all who came near him ; not to suffer a fallen enemy to brood in silence and solitude on past achievements and past misfortunes ; but to afford a consolation to offended pride in seeing one who had performed the greatest things, and who had waged the most stupendous warfare in a mighty cause, engaged in a contest with one of its own underlings about the most petty and contemptible vexations. Those who have no other merit than that of being born to power, have of course a right to wreak their utmost vengeance on all those who challenge competition with them by great actions or immortal renown. The next thing would have been (had not Sir Hudson answered the purpose equally well) to have caged Buonaparte with a baboon to 'mow and chatter at him ;' or to have had him up to the halberts for not pulling off his hat to the Governor or his aide-de-camp : and there are people to be found who would have approved of this treatment mightily.

Las Cases was removed from the island in 1817, and O'Meara a year after ; because the one assisted him in his literary occupations and soothed his personal feelings, while the other refused to be made a tool of the Governor in prying into and making a ministerial version of his sufferings. It was wished that the iron should enter his soul, without alleviation or sympathy. I shall here put together a few particulars of his manner of passing his time under these circumstances, when he could escape the importunity of English loyalty and patriotism, and retire into the recesses of his own mind or the society of the few friends who were left him.

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

He passed the mornings in writing, and the evenings in reading or conversation. He grew fonder of Racine; but his favourite was Corneille. He called his pieces *head-quarter* tragedies, in distinction from *waiting-maids' gossip*; and repeated that had he lived in his time, he would have made him a prince. He had a distaste to Voltaire; and found great fault with his dramas, perhaps justly, as conveying opinions rather than sentiments. He criticised his *Mahomet*, and said he had made him merely an impostor and a tyrant, without representing him as a great man. This was from Voltaire's religious and political antipathies; for those who are free from common prejudices, get others of their own in their stead, to which they are equally bigotted, and which they are for bringing forward on all occasions. When the evening passed off in conversation without having recourse to books, he considered it a point gained. Some one having asked which was the greatest battle that had been fought by the Emperor, he replied, it was difficult to answer that question without inquiring what was meant by the greatest battle. 'Mine,' continued he, 'cannot be judged of separately: they formed a portion of extensive plans. They must therefore be judged of by their results. The battle of Marengo, which was so long undecided, procured for us the command of all Italy. Ulm annihilated a whole army: Jena threw the whole Prussian monarchy into our hands; Friedland opened the Russian Empire to us; and Eckmühl decided the fate of a war. The battle of Moskwa was one in which the greatest talent was displayed, and by which the fewest advantages were obtained. Waterloo, where every thing failed, would, had it succeeded, have saved France and given peace to Europe.' Madame Montholon having asked what troops might be accounted the best, 'Those which gain victories, Madame,' replied the Emperor. 'But,' added he, 'soldiers are capricious and inconstant, like you ladies. The best troops were the Carthaginians under Hannibal; the Romans under the Scipios; the Macedonians under Alexander; and the Prussians under Frederic.' He thought, however, he might safely affirm, that the French troops were of all others those which could most easily be rendered the best, and preserved so. 'With my complete Guard of forty or fifty thousand men, I would have pledged myself to march through Europe. It is perhaps possible to produce troops as good as those that composed my army of Italy and Austerlitz; but certainly nothing can ever surpass them.' The Emperor, who had dwelt for a considerable time on a subject so interesting to him, suddenly recollecting himself, asked what it was o'clock. Being told it was eleven, 'Well,' said he, rising, 'we at least have the merit of having got through the evening without the help either of tragedy or comedy.'

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

It was the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo. The circumstance was mentioned by some one present; and the recollection of it produced a visible impression on the Emperor. 'Incomprehensible day,' said he, in a tone of sorrow—'Concurrence of unheard-of fatalities! Grouchy, Ney, D'Erlon—was there treachery or only misfortune? Alas! poor France!' (Here he covered his eyes with his hands.) 'And yet,' said he, 'all that human skill could do was accomplished! All was not lost until the moment when all had succeeded.' A short time afterwards, referring to the same subject, he exclaimed, 'In that extraordinary campaign, thrice, in less than a week's space, I saw the certain triumph of France and the determination of her fate slip through my fingers. Had it not been for the desertion of a traitor, I should have annihilated the enemy at the outset of the campaign. I should have destroyed him at Ligny, if my left had done its duty. I should have destroyed him again at Waterloo, if my right had not failed me.—Singular defeat, by which, notwithstanding the most fatal catastrophe, the glory of the conquered has not suffered, nor the fame of the conqueror been increased; the memory of the one will survive his destruction; the memory of the other will perhaps be buried in his triumph!'

It has been generally supposed, that Napoleon was a believer in the doctrine of predestination, which, if true, would have been a blemish on his understanding. The following conversation with Las Cases pretty clearly settles that point. 'Pray,' said he, 'am I not thought to be given to a belief in predestination?'—'Yes, Sire; at least by many people.'—'Well, well! let them say on: one may sometimes be tempted to act a part, and it may occasionally be useful. But what are men? How much easier is it to occupy their attention and to strike their imaginations by absurdities than by rational ideas? But can a man of sound sense listen for one moment to such a doctrine? Either predestination admits the existence of free-will, or rejects it. If it admits it, what kind of predetermined result can that be which a simple resolution, a step, a word, may alter or modify *ad infinitum*? If predestination, on the contrary, rejects the existence of free-will, it is quite another question; in that case, a child need only be thrown into its cradle as soon as it is born; there is no necessity for bestowing the least care upon it; for if it be irrevocably decreed that it is to live, it will grow though no food should be given to it. You see that such a doctrine is not to be maintained: predestination is but a word without meaning. The Turks themselves, the patrons of predestination, are not convinced of the doctrine, or medicine would not exist in Turkey; and a man residing in a third floor would not take the trouble of going down stairs, but would immediately throw himself out of

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

the window. You see to what a string of absurdities that will lead.'

Las Cases observes, that whenever the Emperor took up any subject, if he became in the least animated, his language was fit to be printed. On one occasion, when an English ministerial newspaper spoke of the large treasures which Napoleon must possess, and which he no doubt concealed, he answered, 'They are immense, it is true, but they are all exposed to light;' and he then enumerated in eloquent terms the great public works he had executed, and the vast improvements he had bestowed on France. At another time, the Emperor reading in an English newspaper that Lord Castlereagh had said, in a public assembly in Ireland, that Napoleon had declared at St. Helena, that he never would have made peace with England but to deceive her, take her by surprise, and destroy her; and that if the French army was attached to the Emperor, it was because he gave the daughters of the richest families of the empire to his soldiers, moved with a just indignation, he spoke as follows:—'These calumnies uttered against a man who is so barbarously oppressed, and who is not allowed to make his voice heard in answer to them, will be disbelieved by all well-educated and well-disposed persons. When Napoleon was seated on the first throne in the world, then no doubt his enemies had a right to say whatever they pleased; his actions were public, and were a sufficient answer to them; at any rate, that conduct now belonged to public opinion and history; but to utter new and unfounded calumnies against him at the present moment is an act of the utmost meanness and cowardice, and which will not answer the end proposed. Millions of libels have been and are still published every day; but they are without effect. Sixty millions of men of the most polished nations in the world raise their voices to confute them; and fifty thousand Englishmen who are now travelling on the Continent, will on their return home publish the truth to the inhabitants of the three kingdoms of Great-Britain, who will blush at having been so grossly deceived. As for the Bill, by virtue of which Napoleon has been dragged to this rock, it is an act of proscription similar to those of Sylla, and still more atrocious. The Romans unrelentingly pursued Hannibal to the utmost extremities of Bithynia; and Flaminius obtained from King Prusias the death of that great man; yet at Rome Flaminius was accused of having acted thus in order to gratify his personal hatred. It was in vain that he alleged in his defence that Hannibal, yet in the vigour of life, might still prove a dangerous enemy, and that his death was necessary: a thousand voices were raised and answered, that acts of injustice and ungenerous deeds can never be beneficial to a great nation; and that upon such pretences as that now set forth, murder, poisoning, and

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

every species of crime might be justified. The succeeding generations reproached their ancestors with this base act ; they would have given any thing to have had the stain effaced from their annals ; and since the restoration of letters amongst modern nations, every subsequent age has added its imprecations to those pronounced by Hannibal at the moment when he drank the fatal cup : he cursed Rome, who whilst her fleets and legions covered Europe, Asia, and Africa, satiated her vengeance against one man alone and unprotected, because she feared or pretended to fear him. The Romans, however, never violated the rights of hospitality. Sylla found an asylum in the house of Marius. Flaminius did not, before he proscribed Hannibal, receive him on board his ship, and declare that he had orders to treat him favourably : the Roman fleet did not convey him to the port of Ostia ; and Hannibal, instead of placing himself under the protection of the Romans, preferred trusting his person to a King of Asia. At the moment when he was banished, he was not under the protection of the Roman flag ; he was under the banners of a king, who was an enemy to Rome. If in future ages a king of England should be one day brought before the awful tribunal of the nation, his defenders will urge in his behalf the sacred character of a king, the respect due to the throne, to all crowned heads, to the *anointed of the Lord* ! But his accusers will have a right to answer thus :—One of the ancestors of this King whom you defend, banished a man that was his guest, in time of peace ; afraid to put him to death in the face of a nation governed by positive laws and by regular and public forms, he caused his victim to be exposed on the most insalubrious point of a rock situated in another hemisphere in the midst of the ocean ; where this guest perished after a long agony, a prey to the climate, to want, to insults of every kind ! Yet that guest was also a great sovereign, raised to the throne on the shields of thirty-six millions of citizens ; he was master of almost every capital in Europe ; the greatest kings composed his court ; he was generous towards all ; he was during twenty years the arbiter of nations ; his family was allied to every reigning family, even to that of England ; he was twice the *anointed of the Lord*, twice consecrated by the august ceremonies of religion !—And did not Buonaparte perceive that all these titles were so many damning clauses against him ; that it was necessary to pull down and scatter in the dust every trace of that scaffolding which had raised one of the people to an equality with thrones, with the *anointed of the Lord* ; and to show by every act of indignity and degradation the immeasurable distance which subsisted between the meanest of kings and the greatest of men ? How then (judging by this rule) must the *common herd* look in the comparison ? And to what consideration or mercy must the race at large

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

be entitled? To just as much as they have received since the period we are speaking of, namely, that of 'the deliverance of mankind' with their leader into the hands of the Four Great Powers!

Napoleon could pass with equal spirit and facility from the Prince-Regent to Irus the beggar. 'After dinner' (this was in October, 1816) 'he resumed the reading of the *Odyssey*: we had arrived at the passage describing the combat between Ulysses and Irus, on the threshold of the palace, both in the garb of beggars. The Emperor very much disapproved of this episode, which he pronounced to be mean, incongruous, and beneath the character of the chief. "And yet," continued he, "independently of all the faults which in my opinion this incident presents, I still find in it something to interest me. I fancy myself in the situation of Ulysses, and then I can well conceive his dread of being overpowered by a wretched mendicant. Every prince or general has not the broad shoulders of his guards or grenadiers: every man has not the strength of a porter. But Homer has remedied all this by representing his heroes as so many Colossuses: we have no such heroes nowadays. What would have become of us," he added, glancing his eye round, "if we lived in those good times when bodily prowess constituted real power? Why Noverraz (his valet-de-chambre) would wield the sceptre over us all! It must be confessed that civilization favours the mind entirely at the expence of the body."'

Las Cases, who had written an historical ATLAS, often wondered at Napoleon's apparently voluntary power of recalling names and dates. He seemed to possess a stock of information on several points which remained within him in reserve as it were to burst forth with splendour on particular occasions, and which in his moments of carelessness appeared to be not only slumbering but nearly altogether unknown to him. He himself accounted for the clearness of his ideas and the faculty he possessed of being able to protract his application to business for any length of time, by saying that the different affairs were put up in his head as in a closet. 'When I wish to interrupt a train of ideas, I close the drawer which contains it, and open that which contains another. They do not mix together, and do not fatigue or inconvenience me.' He had never been kept awake, he said, by an involuntary pre-occupation of mind. 'If I wish to sleep, I shut up all the drawers, and I am asleep.' So that he had always slept when he wanted rest, and almost at will. The following traits as given by Las Cases will be curious to the reader and are characteristic of the man. 'In the common intercourse of life and his familiar conversation, the Emperor mutilated the names most familiar to him, even ours: yet I do not think this would have happened to him on any public occasion. I have heard him many times, during our walks, repeat the

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

celebrated speech of Augustus in Corneille's tragedy ; and he has never missed saying, "Take a seat, Sylla," instead of Cinna. He would frequently create names according to his fancy ; and when he had once adopted them, they remained fixed in his mind, although we pronounced them properly a hundred times a day in his hearing ; but he would have been struck, if we had used them as he had altered them.¹ It was the same thing with respect to orthography : in general, he did not attend to it : yet if our copies had contained any faults of spelling, he would have complained of it. One day the Emperor said to me, "You do not write orthographically, do you ? " This question gave rise to a sarcastic smile from a bystander, who thought it was meant to convey a reproach. The Emperor who saw this continued : "At least, I suppose you do not ; for a man occupied with public or other important business, a minister for instance, cannot and need not attend to orthography. His ideas must flow faster than his hand can trace them : he has only time to place his points, he must put words in letters and phrases in words ; and let the scribes make it out afterwards." He indeed left a great deal for the copyists to do : he was their torment : his hand-writing actually resembled hieroglyphics ; he often could not decypher it himself. My son was one day reading to him a chapter of the *Campaign of Italy* : on a sudden, he stopped short, unable to make out the writing. "The little block-head," said the Emperor, "cannot read his own hand-writing."—"It is not mine, Sire."—"And whose, then ?"—"Your Majesty's."—"How so, you little rogue, do you mean to insult me ? " The Emperor took the manuscript, tried a long while to read it, and at last threw it down, saying, "He is right : I cannot tell myself what is written." He has often sent the copyists to me to read to them what he had been unable to decypher.

Not long after their arrival at St. Helena, Madame Bertrand was delivered of a son, and when Napoleon went to visit her, she said, 'I have the honour of presenting to your Majesty the first French subject who has entered Longwood without the permission of Lord Bathurst.' At the end of 1816, he first received a letter from his mother, saying 'she was well and wished to join him at St. Helena ;' but it was given to him opened, and Napoleon, hurt at this circumstance, having twice read it, tore it in fragments, and threw it on the

¹ This might be enlarged upon as one of the causes that brought him to St. Helena. Does not this account of him in his latter years forcibly throw us back to the description of his early childhood with his stockings down about his heels, and fighting with all those who noticed it, or repeated the verses—

'Napoleone di mezza calzetta
Fa l'amore a Giacominetta ?'

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

floor. A bust of his son was at first detained from him ; and forwarded at last in the most ungracious manner. His attachment to the little Napoleon is acknowledged by all who had opportunities of judging : indeed the mere furniture of his room proved the value he set on this and other similar ties and recollections. He himself appealed to his behaviour to the two Empresses, and their affection for him, as a full answer to all the misrepresentations of his private character.

The conversations which are recapitulated in Mr. O'Meara's work have less sentiment and flow of diction ; but are perhaps still distinguished by acuteness and solidity. Napoleon would naturally assume a difference of tone more or less confidential with these two persons. In the remarks occasioned by the arrival of Lord Amherst on his return from the embassy to China, he figures as a diplomatist.

'I told the Emperor' (says O'Meara) 'that Lord Amherst (the late British Ambassador to China) was expected in a few days. He said he thought the English ministers had acted wrong in not ordering him to comply with the customs of the place he was sent to, as otherwise they ought not to have sent him at all. I observed that the English would consider it as debasing to the nation, if Lord Amherst had consented to prostrate himself in the manner required. That if such a point were conceded, the Chinese would probably not be contented, and would require similar ceremonies to be performed to those insisted upon by the Japanese, and so disgracefully complied with by the Dutch. Napoleon replied, "It is quite a different thing. One is a mere ceremony, performed by all the great men of the nation to their chief : the other is a national degradation required of strangers, and of strangers only. It is my opinion that whatever is the custom of a nation and is practised by the first characters of that nation towards their chief, cannot degrade strangers who perform the same. Different nations have different customs. In England, you kiss the king's hand at court. Such a thing in France would be looked upon as ridiculous, and the person who did it would be held up to public scorn : but still the French ambassador who performed it in England would not be considered as having degraded himself. In England, some hundred years back, the king was served kneeling : the same ceremony now takes place in Spain. In Italy, you kiss the Pope's toe ; yet it is not considered as a degradation. A man who goes into a country must comply with the ceremonies in use there ; and it would have been no degradation whatever for Lord Amherst to have submitted to such ceremonies before the Emperor of China as are performed by the first mandarins of that empire. You say that he was willing to render such homage as was paid to his own king. You have no right to send a man to China to tell them that they are to perform certain ceremonies, because such

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

are practised in England. If I had sent an ambassador to China, I would have ordered him to make himself acquainted with the ceremonies performed by the first mandarins before the Emperor, and if required, to do the same himself, and no more. You ought to have treated those barbarians like children, and to have humoured them, as if you had sent an ambassador to the moon. I recollect having had a conversation on the subject at Tilsit with the Emperor Alexander, when we were very good friends. He asked my opinion and advice : I gave it him nearly as I have done to you. He was perfectly convinced ; and wrote a reprimand to his ambassador for not having complied with the ceremonies required from him." I observed that it was likely Lord Amherst would wait upon him. Napoleon replied, " If he is to be presented by the Governor, or if the latter sends one of his staff with him, I will not receive him : if he comes with the Admiral, I shall. Neither will I receive the new Admiral if he is to be introduced by the Governor. In his last letter there is an insult to us. He says, that we may go round by Miss Mason's, but that we must not go off the main road. Where is the main road ? I never could find any. If I were by any accident to quit it for a few yards, I should be exposed to be shot at by a sentinel. I would not receive my own son, if he were to be presented by him."

" " I always had a high opinion of your seamen," said Napoleon one day, in a conversation arising out of our expedition to Algiers. " When I was returning from Holland along with the Empress Maria-Louisa, we stopped to rest at Givet. During the night, a violent storm of wind and rain came on, which swelled the Meuse so much that the ridge over it was carried away. I was very anxious to depart ; and ordered all the boatmen in the place to be assembled, that I might be enabled to cross the river. They said that the waters were so high that it would be impossible to pass before two or three days. I questioned some of them and soon discovered that they were fresh-water seamen. I then recollected that there were English prisoners in the barracks ; and ordered that some of the oldest and best seamen among them should be brought before me to the banks of the river. The waters were very high, and the current rapid and dangerous. I asked them if they could join a number of boats together so that I might pass over. They answered that it was possible, but hazardous. I desired them to set about it instantly. In the course of a few hours they succeeded in effecting what the others had pronounced to be impossible ; and I crossed before the evening was over. I ordered those who had worked at it to receive a sum of money each, a suit of clothes, and their liberty. Marchand was with me at the time."

In the beginning of 1817 the papers were full of the distresses felt in

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

this country. Buonaparte often adverted in forcible terms to this subject, and on one occasion said—‘ All your miseries I maintain to be owing to the imbecility and ignorance of Lord Castlereagh, and his inattention to the real interests of his country. What would those Englishmen who lived a hundred years ago say, if they could rise from their graves, be informed of your amazing successes, cast their eyes upon England, witness her distress, and be told that in the treaty of peace not a single article for the benefit of England had been stipulated ; that on the contrary you had given up conquests and commercial rights necessary to your existence ? When Austria gained ten millions of inhabitants, Russia eight, Prussia ten, when Holland, Bavaria, Sardinia, and every other power obtained an increase of territory, why not England, who was the main organ of all the success ? Instead of establishing a number of independent maritime states, such as Hamburgh, Stralsund, Dantzic, Genoa, to serve as *entrepôts* for your manufactures, with conditions either secret or otherwise, favourable to your commerce, you have basely given up Genoa to the King of Sardinia, and united Belgium to Holland. You have rendered yourselves hateful to the Italians and Belgians, and have done irreparable injury to your trade. For although it is a great point for you that Belgium should be separated from France, it is a serious disadvantage that she should be united to Holland. Holland has no manufactures, and consequently would become a warehouse for yours, from whence a prodigious influx might be kept up on the Continent. Now, however, that Belgium has been made a part of Holland, this last will naturally prefer taking the manufactures of its own subjects to those of a stranger, and all Belgium may be called a manufacturing town. Independent of this, in case of any future war with France, Holland must join the latter through fear of losing the provinces of Belgium. It would have been much better to have given it to Austria ; or why not have made it an independent country, and placed an English prince on the throne ? Now let us see the state you are actually in. You are nearly as much shut out from the Continent as when I reigned and promulgated the Continental system. I ask you what peace dictated by me, supposing that I had been victorious, could have been worse in its effects for England than the one made by Lord Castlereagh, when she was triumphant ? The hatred which your ministers bore to me has precipitated them into an abyss. You recollect I told you some time ago, that I thought it bad policy to leave the English troops in France, and make Lord Wellington commander-in-chief. You now see the ill effects of it. Prussia denies entrance to your merchandise. What can you do ? You can neither pretend to intimidate, nor proceed to extremities, as Prussia would fall upon Lord Wellington

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and his forty thousand men. While you retain your troops upon the Continent, you will never be independent. Had you, after the grand blow was struck, when I was disposed of, withdrawn your troops from the Continent, you would not have drawn down the hatred and jealousy of the continental powers, especially at seeing Lord Wellington commander-in-chief, and they never would have dared to shut their ports against you. You could then have sent your ships, blockaded their ports, and have declared, "If you do not permit my merchandise to enter, no other shall either go in or come out!" They would soon have listened to reason. Now, your hands are tied; your meddling in continental affairs and trying to make yourselves a great military power, instead of attending to the sea and commerce, will yet be your ruin as a nation. You were greatly offended with me for having called you a *nation of shop-keepers*. Had I meant by this that you were a nation of cowards, you would have had reason to be displeased, even though it were ridiculous and contrary to historical facts; but no such thing was ever intended. I meant that you were a nation of merchants, and that all your great riches and your grand resources arose from commerce, which is true. What else constitutes the riches of England? It is not extent of territory nor a numerous population. It is not mines of gold, silver, or diamonds. Moreover, no man of sense ought to be ashamed of being called a shop-keeper. But your Prince and your ministers appear to wish to change altogether the character of the English, and to render you another nation; to make you ashamed of your shops and your trade, which made you what you are, and to sigh after nobility, titles, and crosses; in fact, to assimilate you with the French. What other object can there be in all those *cordons*, crosses, and honours, which are so profusely showered? You are all gentlemen now, instead of the plain old English character. Nothing is to be seen or heard of England at present but "Sir John" and "My lady." All those things did very well with me in France, because they were conformable to the spirit of the nation; but believe me, it is contrary both to the spirit and interest of England. Stick to your ships, your commerce, and counting-houses, and leave *cordons*, crosses, and cavalry-uniforms to the Continent, and you will prosper. Lord Castlereagh himself was ashamed of your being called a nation of merchants, and frequently said in France, that it was a mistaken idea to suppose that England depended upon commerce, or was indebted to it for her riches; and added, that it was not by any means necessary to her. How I laughed when I heard of this false pride! He betrayed his country at the peace. I do not mean to say that he did so from his heart, but he betrayed it by grossly neglecting its interests. He was in short the agent of the Allied Sovereigns. Perhaps he wanted to

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

convince them that you were not a nation of merchants, by showing clearly that you would not drive any advantageous bargain for yourselves, but magnanimously give up every thing that other nations might cry, "Oh! how nobly England has behaved!" Had he attended to the interests of his own country, had he stipulated for commercial treaties and advantages, to indemnify her for the waste of blood and the enormous sacrifices she had made, why then they might have said, "What a mercenary people! They are truly a nation of shop-keepers; see what bargains they want to make!" and Lord Castlereagh might not have been so well received in the drawing-room. Talent he may have displayed in some instances,' continued the Emperor, 'and *great pertinacity in accomplishing my downfall*;¹ but as to a knowledge of or attention to the interests of his own country, he has manifested neither the one nor the other. Probably for a thousand years, such another opportunity of aggrandising England will not occur. In the position of affairs, nothing could have been refused you. But now, after such romantic and unparallded successes, after having been favoured by God and by accidents in the manner you have been, after effecting impossibilities, as I may say—effecting what the most sanguine mind could never have entertained the most distant idea of, what has England gained? The *cordons* of the Allied Sovereigns for Lord Castlereagh! When a nation has been favoured so much as yours has been, and misery exists in that nation, it is owing to the imbecility of its ministers. The transition from war to peace cannot explain it. It is of too long a continuance. England has played for all or nothing. She has gained all, performed wonders, yet has nothing; and her people are starving and worse off than they were in the midst of the war; while France, who has lost every thing, is doing well, and the wants of her people abundantly supplied. France has got fat, notwithstanding the liberal bleedings she has had; while England is like a man who has had a false momentary strength given to him by intoxicating liquors, but who after their effect ceases, sinks into a state of debility.—I see no other way now to extricate you from your difficulties than by reducing the interest of the national debt, confiscating the greatest part of the revenues of the clergy, abolishing all the sinecures, diminishing considerably the army, and establishing a system of reduction altogether. Let those who want priests pay them. Your sinking-fund is a bubble. Impose a heavy tax on absentees. It is too late now for you to make commercial treaties. The opportunity is gone; and your nation is indebted to your drivellers of ministers for all the calamities which will befall it, and which are to be entirely attributed to their criminal neglect.'

¹ That was the only thing he was charged with.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

It is plain by the tenour of these observations, that Napoleon had not arrived at that pitch of philosophy by which our ministerial writers proved, that the 'waste of blood' was only a seasonable draining of the superfluous population, and that the debt and taxes take nothing from, if indeed they do not add to, the wealth and prosperity of the country. He had not received the new light on *absenteeism*. Buonaparte probably thought, that a loan of ten millions to Austria was a loss of ten millions to England, and that it was no answer to say that it would come back to us on the tide of commerce, as it would enable them to buy so much more goods of us—with our own money. As well might you advise a shop-keeper to give five pounds to a beggar at his door, because the beggar may come in and purchase goods to that amount with it. He would lose so much either in goods or money. The individual shop-keeper would not be gulled by this argument, though the nation of shop-keepers were, who in spite of their ledgers and arithmetic could easily have been persuaded that two and two made five in their hatred of Buonaparte; for however great their love of themselves, their hatred of others is a much stronger principle. Mr. Southey somewhere accounts for the distress of the country in 1817 (and probably at present) by the phrase of 'the transition from war to peace,' and emphatically observes, that 'the war was a customer to the manufacturers of Birmingham and Sheffield alone, to the amount of twenty millions a year.' Be it so: but if this were all, and this were really a benefit and source of riches to the country, why not continue to be a customer to these manufacturers of steel and brass in peace as well as war; and having bought and paid for so many cannon and so much gunpowder fire them off in the air as well as against the French?—The manufacturers of Birmingham and Sheffield would flourish equally in either case. If the encouraging and paying for labour were the only thing to be considered, and not the manner in which that labour is directed so as to produce a supply of the wants and comforts of life, then it would not signify whether a hundred men (and by parity of reason a million) were employed in building houses and making necessary articles of furniture, or in digging a hole in the ground and filling it up again, in raising so much corn or in throwing it into the sea when raised. Men may be equally employed and paid for doing good, for doing mischief, or for doing neither one nor the other; but the benefit to the community is not the same. A sword, however well-tempered or expensively wrought in the workshops of Birmingham and Sheffield, is not good to eat, or to drink, or to clothe one's-self with, or to shelter any one from the cold or wet—it is merely good to defend one's-self against an enemy, and however necessary the sword may be for this purpose, it is still an expensive article, though the money is

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

well laid out. But if the enemy is a mere *bugbear*, then those who have raised it and occasioned all this waste of blood and treasure, ought to pay dearly for their folly and their guilt. Either war is a losing trade, or the government who have so long carried it on must have been bad husbands of the resources put into their hands; for otherwise they must have been able to return those who lent them their wealth, both principal and interest, long since. The government wasted the principal in a lavish war-expenditure (this was the period of our dram-drinking)—the people have now to make up the interest (this is the collapse). The millions sunk in the war were sunk in the sea. The lives lost, the limbs amputated, the ships dismantled, the cannon spiked, the gunpowder blown in the air, will fetch nothing in the market. Suppose not only what the fundholders have already advanced, but all they have left in money, houses, goods were thrown away in sham sea-fights, or in mock-crusades for religion and social order (not quite so innocent a thing), or shipped off to the Continent—would this be no loss to the country, that is, would it not ruin the wealthier classes if not made up to them, or if made up to them by taxes and the hard labour of the poorer, would it not proportionably oppress and impoverish the latter? To say the contrary is not sophistry but impudence: yet it has been called *science*. We cannot *have our cake, and eat it*. We have insisted on our pound of flesh, like Shylock; but we must forego our three thousand ducats. We have restored the Bourbons—and to make slaves of others, have made beggars of ourselves. The Minister has followed Buonaparte's advice with respect to Catholic emancipation: we shall see whether his next attempt will be upon the tithes or funds. I doubt the fact and the consequences.¹

Napoleon expressed his opinion of the Battle of Waterloo in these terms:—

‘The plan of the battle,’ said he, ‘will not in the eyes of the historian reflect any credit on Lord Wellington as a general. In the first place, he ought not to have given battle with the armies divided. They ought to have been united and encamped before the 15th. In the next, the choice of ground was bad; because if he had been beaten he could not have retreated, as there was only one road leading through

¹ War tends to increase the natural inequality of property, by an arbitrary accumulation of wealth, by contracts, monopolies, grants, pensions, &c. It is pretended that this is no detriment to the community, because the wealth remains in the country, and is laid out by rich individuals in giving employment to the poor. Suppose a thousand pounds thus accumulated in the hands of an individual: it is spent in hiring labourers to build him a fine house, or to make fine furniture, or a hot-house, or an ice-house, &c. Had it remained in the pockets of ten or twenty individuals, it would have been equally laid out by them in employing labourers to procure comforts for themselves, instead of pampering an individual.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

the forest in his rear. He also committed a fault which might have proved the destruction of all his army, without its ever having commenced the campaign, or being drawn out in battle; he allowed himself to be surprised. On the 15th I was at Charleroi, and had beaten the Prussians without his knowing any thing about it. I had gained forty-eight hours of manœuvres upon him, which was a great object; and if some of my generals had shown that vigour and genius which they had displayed in other times, I should have taken his army in cantonments without ever fighting a battle. But they were discouraged, and fancied that they saw an army of a hundred thousand men everywhere opposed to them. I had not time enough myself to attend to the *minutiae* of the army. I counted upon surprising and cutting him up in detail. I knew of Bulow's arrival at eleven o'clock; but I did not regard it. I had still eighty chances out of a hundred in my favour. Notwithstanding the great superiority of force against me, I was convinced that I should obtain the victory. I had about seventy thousand men, of whom fifteen thousand were cavalry. I had also two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon; but my troops were so good, that I esteemed them sufficient to beat a hundred and twenty thousand. Of all those troops, however, I only reckoned the English as being able to cope with my own. The others I thought little of. I believe that of English there were from thirty-five to forty thousand. These I esteemed to be as brave and as good as my own troops; the English army was well known latterly on the Continent; and besides, your nation possesses courage and energy. As to the Prussians, Belgians, and others, half the number of my troops were sufficient to beat them. I only left thirty-four thousand men to take care of the Prussians. The chief causes of the loss of the battle were, first of all, Grouchy's great tardiness and neglect in executing his orders; next, the *grenadiers à cheval* and the cavalry under General Guyot, which I had in reserve, and which were never to leave me, engaged without orders and without my knowledge; so that after the last charge, when the troops were beaten, and the English cavalry advanced, I had not a single corps of cavalry in reserve to resist them; instead of one which I esteemed to be equal to double their own number. In consequence of this, the English attack succeeded, and all was lost. There was no means of rallying. The youngest general would not have committed the fault of leaving an army entirely without reserve which however occurred here, whether in consequence of treason or not, I cannot say. These were the two principal causes of the loss of the battle of Waterloo.'

'If Lord Wellington had entrenched himself,' continued he, 'I would not have attacked him. As a general, his plan did not show

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

talent. He certainly displayed great courage and obstinacy : but a little must be taken away even from that, when you consider that he had no means of retreat, and that, had he made the attempt, not a man of his whole army would have escaped. First, to the firmness and bravery of his troops, for the English fought with the greatest courage and obstinacy, he is principally indebted for the victory, and not his own conduct as a general ; and next, to the arrival of Blücher, to whom the victory is more to be attributed than to Wellington, and more credit due as a general ; because he, although beaten the day before, assembled his troops, and brought them into action in the evening. I believe, however,' continued Napoleon, ' that Wellington is a man of great firmness. The glory of such a victory is a great thing ; but in the eye of the historian, his military reputation will gain nothing by it.'

These opinions got vent in Europe, and it was thought necessary to stop that vent ; for any thing that tended to strip the truth of its disguises, or to show that Buonaparte had common sense, common decency, and common humanity, went to divert the public mind from the great object of fear and hatred that had been so long held up to it, and to expose that system of violence and fraud by which mankind had been mocked and robbed of their dearest and just-discovered birth-rights. It was therefore judged expedient to deprive the Emperor of the society of those who might serve as a medium of communication between him and the rest of the world, to insulate him more and more, and to leave him to perish on his rock almost alone. Las Cases was first disposed of. He had been foolish enough to write a letter on silk, addressed to Lucien Buonaparte, complaining of the treatment they received ; and entrusted it to a Mulatto servant (a creature of Sir Hudson Lowe's) to be forwarded to Europe. He was of course detected ; and this was made a ground for sending him, with his son, after six weeks' confinement, first to the Cape and then to England, where he was not suffered to land ; but ran through Europe, trying in vain to interest the legitimate rulers in favour of his and their former master. Napoleon's mother at the same time addressed a letter to the Congress of Allied Sovereigns on the same subject, which was beneath her own and her son's dignity. There is no appeal from or to deliberate injustice and arbitrary power. It can answer no end but to gratify pride and tyranny, by a voluntary as well as involuntary submission to them. It ought of all things to be avoided. A bust of young Napoleon was brought out by a gunner who was going by way of St. Helena to India. This was made a state-crime and misprision of treason against the constituted authorities of the island. Sir Hudson took the bust from the man, concealed it for some time, would not let the gunner land for several weeks, then sent him on to the Cape, and detained

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

from him for several months 300 pounds which Napoleon had ordered to be transmitted to the poor fellow after he had received the present. His expressions of grief and indignation on this occasion were most poignant. 'Look at that bust,' he exclaimed. 'The man who would give an order to break that image' (alluding to a report that Sir Thomas Reade had done so), 'would plunge a knife into the heart of the original, if it were in his power.' Though the Governor was unwilling to let Napoleon see the bust of his son, he lost no time in forwarding to him the newspapers containing an account that he had been deprived, by a decree of the Allies, of the succession to the Duchies of Parma and Placentia. Napoleon at first seemed vexed, but afterwards appeared reconciled to it. It was not always possible from his countenance to tell how news affected him. 'I could listen,' said he, 'to the intelligence of the death of my wife, of my son, or of all my family, without a change of features. Not the slightest emotion or alteration of countenance would be visible. Every thing would appear indifferent and calm. But when alone in my chamber, then I suffer. Then the feelings of the man burst forth.' His health declined; and he declared his conviction (in the beginning of 1818) that he should not hold out long. His illness was in fact attributable to the want of exercise, owing to the restrictions on his rides, imposed apparently for that very purpose. The Governor and his surgeon had many disputes on this subject, as well as on that of the latter's turning spy, which Sir Hudson loudly insisted on as a duty he owed to his king and country. Against all these expostulations Mr. O'Meara held out like an Englishman of the old, not of the new school. An idea may be formed of the scandalous length to which the caprice and insolence of the Governor were carried by the following specimen. 'The Governor replied that it was my duty to inform him of whatever circumstances came to my knowledge, and of the subject of my conversations with General Buonaparte; for if I did not, it was easily in his power to prohibit me from holding any communication with him, except on medical subjects, and then only when sent to for that purpose. I answered that it would be acting the part of a spy, and informer, and a *mouton*. That I never understood the government had placed me about Napoleon for other than medical purposes, that my duty did not require me to commit dishonourable actions, and that I would not do so for any person. Sir Hudson remained silent for a few moments, eyeing me furiously, and asked me what was the meaning of the word *mouton*? I replied "*Mouton* means a person who insinuates himself into the confidence of another for the purpose of betraying it." Sir Hudson then broke out into a paroxysm of rage; said that I had given him the greatest possible insult in his official capacity that could be offered, and con-

RESIDENCE AT ST. HELENA

cluded with ordering me to leave the room; saying that he would not suffer any person who had made use of such language to sit in his presence. I told him that I did not voluntarily come into it nor even would have entered his house, unless compelled to do so. He walked about in a frantic manner, repeating in a boisterous tone, "Leave the room, Sir," which he continued bawling out for some time after I had actually quitted it.' This state of things could not last very long. Buonaparte not unreasonably conjectured that Sir Hudson's object in setting O'Meara to watch and report his conversation was not merely to debar him of his society as a companion, but to lessen his confidence in him as a physician, and deprive him of medical aid altogether, so that the struggle might be sooner over. Mr. O'Meara was soon after ordered home, and took leave of Buonaparte on the 25th of July, 1818. His instructions were to see the Emperor no more; but these he resolutely disobeyed, as the state of Napoleon's health required that he should prescribe a regimen for him, and prepare the medicines which it would be proper for him to take in the absence of a surgeon, an absence likely to be of long duration, as he was perfectly sure he would accept of none recommended by Sir Hudson Lowe. He accordingly went instantly to Napoleon's apartment, and communicated to him the order he had received. 'The crime,' said he, 'will be the sooner completed. I have lived too long for them. Your ministers are very daring. When the Pope was in France, sooner would I have cut off my right-hand than have signed an order for the removal of his surgeon.' He gave him introductions to his family in Europe, and desired that none of them should come to St. Helena to witness the privations and humiliations under which he laboured. He begged to have information sent him respecting the education of his son, and embracing him, said, 'Adieu, O'Meara, we shall meet no more.' On his return to Europe, Mr. O'Meara published his Journal; and it was one of the first works that tended effectively to remove the veil which had been spread over the character and sentiments of him who was the subject of it. General Gourgaud and Madame Montholon had returned to Europe some time before.¹

¹ I add the following to the previous list of particulars :—

Shortly afterwards I met Capt. Balston, of the Hon. Company's sea-service, who reminded me of our former acquaintance. By him I was informed that a gentleman had arrived from China, with a letter of introduction to me from Mr. Urmston, of Macao, with whom I had been on terms of intimacy. On seeing the gentleman afterwards, I found that his name was Manning, and that he was the person of whom I was in search. He wore a long black beard, and had travelled through the kingdom of Thibet, as far as the frontiers of China. I told him that the Emperor had expressed great curiosity about the Grand Lama, and that if he came up to Longwood, there was every probability that he would see him. Mr. Manning related that he had been a prisoner in France, and had been released by Napoleon, and furnished with a

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

CHAPTER THE LAST

THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

IN the beginning of 1819 Dr. F. Antommarchi, a native of Corsica, and professor of anatomy at Florence, was chosen at the desire of Cardinal Fesch and Madame Mere, and by permission of the English

passport, as soon as the Emperor had learned that he was a person travelling for information which might ultimately benefit society; that as a mark of his gratitude for this favour, he had sent some little presents to the Governor for him, with a request that they might be forwarded, and that he would ask a pass for the purpose of endeavouring to see him.

Mr. Manning, accompanied by Capt. Balston, came up to Count Bertrand's. The former told me that he had been directed by the Governor, for what reason he could not divine, not to communicate to the Count that he had sent a few presents to him for Napoleon. After they had been about an hour at Count Bertrand's, Napoleon came in, accompanied by General Montholon. He accosted Capt. Balston first, and observed, "Oh, I have seen you here before." He then asked Mr. Manning some questions. Manning related that he had been in France in 1805 (I think), and was one of the persons who had been detained; that he had written a letter to him (Napoleon), stating that he was travelling for the benefit of the world at large, which had procured his release. "What protection had you?" asked Napoleon. "Had you a letter from Sir Joseph Banks to me?" Manning replied, that he had no protection whatever, nor letter from Sir Joseph Banks, nor had he any friends to interest themselves in his behalf; that he had merely written a letter to him, stating his situation. "Was it your simple letter which obtained your liberty?" asked Napoleon. "It was my simple letter," replied Manning, "that induced you to grant it me, for which I am very grateful, and beg to thank you." Napoleon asked him where he had lived, &c. and looked at the map of the countries in the Atlas of Las Cases, asking a variety of questions about the route he had taken; whether he had seen the Grand Lama; the manners, customs, &c. of the countries he had passed through.

Manning gave a clear and concise reply to every question; said that he had seen the Lama, whom he described to be an intelligent boy of seven years old, and had performed the same ceremonies in his presence as were done by others who were admitted to it. Napoleon said, "How did you escape being taken up as a spy?" "I hope," replied Manning, "that there is nothing in my countenance which would indicate my being a spy;" at which Napoleon laughed, and said, "How came it to pass, that you being profane, according to their ideas, could gain admission to the presence of the Lama?" Mr. Manning answered that he honoured and paid respect to all religions, and thereby gained admission. Napoleon desired to know if he had passed for an Englishman, and observed that the shape of his nose would indicate his being an European? The other replied that he had passed for a native of Calcutta, but he believed it was known that he was an Englishman; that there were some races of men there who had similar formation of nose. Napoleon then observed with a smile, that "*Messieurs les voyageurs* frequently told *contes*, and that the existence of the Grand Lama had been denied by several." Manning answered, "*Je ne suis pas du nombre de ces voyageurs là*; that truth was not falsehood;" at which Napoleon laughed and asked many other questions. Manning related that the chief part of the revenues of the Grand Lama arose from presents made to him by the princes and others who

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

government, to be sent out as physician to Napoleon at St. Helena. Two priests and two domestics accompanied him. They travelled slowly through Germany and arrived in London April 19, 1819. Here numberless delays were opposed to his departure, and offers and insinuations thrown out to detain him in England. He frequently saw O'Meara and Mr. Stokoe, the surgeon of the *Conqueror*, who, after attending Napoleon a few times in the preceding winter and reporting the danger of his situation, was prevented by Sir Hudson Lowe (for what purpose it is difficult to imagine) from repeating his visits and sent home. All those who approached Napoleon became interested in his fate, which was a heinous crime in the eyes of his jailers and *l'èx-majesté* against the new doctrines of Legitimacy. Not to shock the exclusive pretensions of kings or give the lie to the stories which had been circulated of him, he ought to have been a scare-crow that disgusted and frightened away all those who came near him. The contrast was however so striking and scandalous, as to be a constant theme of irritation and alarm. After a number of disappointments, and an inconvenient passage in a trading vessel, which was hardly supplied with necessary provisions, Antommarchi and his companions arrived at St. Helena on the 18th of September. He was well received by Sir Hudson Lowe, who invited him to dine with his staff; but with difficulty obtained access to Napoleon, who from this circumstance, as well as from his having brought no letters either from the Cardinal or his mother, began to entertain doubts of the character in which Antommarchi came out. After some interrogatories, however, and from the accident of his being a fellow-countryman, he was presently installed in the Emperor's good opinion and in his new office. The state of Napoleon's health did not correspond with the previous accounts which Sir Hudson Lowe had given of it: he was ill and suffering greatly, though not in imminent danger. The blow had been given to his constitution by the climate, and by the seclusion imposed on him by the insults and violence to which he was liable if he ever stirred out. These odious and vexatious restrictions were obstinately refused to be taken off (at the remonstrance of his physician) being considered (together with the probable contingency which they involved) as the *sine qua non* of the repose of Europe and the safety of thrones. The Emperor overwhelmed Antommarchi with questions

believed in him; that temporally, however, he was subject to the Chinese; that he never married, neither did his priests; that the body into which, according to their belief, the spirit passed, was discovered by signs known only to the priests. Napoleon then asked several questions about the Chinese language, the late embassy, if the Russians had ever penetrated in that direction, and whether he intended to publish an account of his travels; after which he asked Balston some questions about his ship, wished them a good morning and departed.'—A VOICE FROM ST. HELENA, vol. ii. p. 90.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

concerning his mother and family, the Princess Julia and Las Cases, whom he had seen in passing through Frankfort; expatiated with satisfaction on the retreat which he had at one time meditated in Corsica; entered into some discussions with the Doctor on his profession; and then directed his attention to the details of his disorder. While he examined the symptoms, the Emperor continued his remarks. They were sometimes serious, sometimes lively. Kindness, indignation, gaiety were expressed by turns in his words and in his countenance. 'Well, Doctor!' he exclaimed, 'what is your opinion? Am I to trouble much longer the digestion of kings?'—'You will survive them, Sire.'—'Aye, I believe you: they will not be able to subject to the ban of Europe the fame of our victories: it will traverse ages; it will proclaim the conquerors and the conquered, those who were generous, and those who were not so: posterity will judge; I do not dread its decision.'—'This after-life belongs to you of right. Your name will never be repeated with admiration, but it must recal those warriors without glory so basely leagued against a single man. But you are not near your end; you have yet a long career to run.'—'No, Doctor! the English plot is taking effect: I cannot hold out long under this frightful climate.'—'Your excellent constitution is proof against its pernicious effects.'—'It once did not yield to the strength of mind with which nature has endowed me; but the transition from a life of action to a complete seclusion has ruined all. I have grown fat, my energy is gone, the bow is unstrung.'—I did not, says Antommarchi, try to combat an opinion but too well-founded. I diverted the conversation to another subject, and began to talk of the situation and wishes of Europe, and asked Napoleon if he would be unfaithful to his own glory and act as an accomplice in the project which England was putting in force against him. 'Be it so,' cried he, 'your independence, your freedom please me. You have quitted all to bring me the succours of art. It is but just that I should do something in return; I resign myself to your direction. Let medicine give the order, I submit to its decisions. I entrust my health to your care. I owe you the detail of the habits I have acquired, of the affections to which I am subject.

'The hours at which I obey the injunctions of nature are in general extremely irregular. I sleep, I eat according to circumstances or the situation in which I am placed; my sleep is ordinarily sound and tranquil. If pain or any accident interrupt it, I leap on the floor, call for a light, walk, set to work, and fix my attention on some object: sometimes I remain in the dark, change my apartment, lie down in another bed, or stretch myself on the sofa. I am up at two, three, four in the morning: I call for some one to keep me company, amuse myself with

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

recollections or business, and wait for the return of day. I go out as soon as it appears, take a stroll, and when the sun shows itself, I re-enter and go to bed again, where I remain a longer or a shorter time, according as the day promises to turn out. If it is bad, and I feel irritation and uneasiness, I have recourse to the method I have just mentioned. I change my posture, pass from my bed to the sofa, from the sofa to the bed, seek and find a degree of freshness, and am the better for it. I do not describe to you my morning costume; it has nothing to do with the sufferings I endure, and besides I do not wish to deprive you of the pleasure of your surprise when you see it. These ingenious contrivances carry me on to nine or ten o'clock; sometimes later. I then order the breakfast to be brought, which I take from time to time in my bath, but most commonly in the garden. Either Bertrand or Montholon keep me company, often both of them. Physicians have the right of regulating the table; it is fit I should give you an account of mine. Behold what it consists of: a basin of soup, two plates of meat, one of vegetables, a salad when I can take it, compose the whole service: half a bottle of claret, which I dilute with a good deal of water, serves me for drink: I drink a little of it pure towards the end of the repast. Sometimes, when I feel fatigued, I substitute champagne for claret: it is a certain means of giving a fillip to the stomach.' Antommarchi asked what kind of vegetables he most frequently used. These were the commonest, particularly lentils, the demand for which had set the whole island in commotion. One of his favourite dishes was a roast leg of mutton; and he liked the brownest part or that which was most done best.

The Doctor having expressed his admiration of a temperance so rare, he replied—'In my marches with the army of Italy, I never failed to put into the bow of my saddle a bottle of wine, some bread, and a cold fowl. This provision sufficed for the wants of the day; I may even say that I often shared it with others. I thus gained time; the economy of my table turned to account on the field of battle. For the rest I eat fast, masticate little, my meals do not consume my hours. This is not what you will approve the most; but in my present situation, what signifies it? I am attacked with a liver complaint,¹ a malady which is general in this horrible climate. I must submit; and expiate on this rock the glory with which I have covered France, the blows which I have inflicted on England. See also how they use their power. For more than a year, they have prohibited me the succours of medicine. I am deprived of the physicians who possessed my confidence. My executioner finds my agony too long. He hastens, he urges it; he invokes my death by all manner of means. There is

¹ This afterwards proved to be an error.

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

not any thing, even the air which I breathe, which his sordid soul does not grudge me. Would you believe it, that his attempts have been incessant, open, so that I might even have been dispatched by an English bayonet? Montholon was ill; he refused to have any communication with Bertrand: he wanted to open a correspondence direct with me. He sent his satellites here twice a day; Reade, Wynyard, his confidential agents, besieged these miserable cabins, and would have forced their way into my chamber. I had my doors barricadoed: I loaded my pistols, my guns (they are so still), and threatened to blow out the brains of the first person who should be rash enough to violate my retreat. They withdrew, crying out as loud as they could bawl, that they wanted to see Napoleon Buonaparte; that Napoleon Buonaparte must come out; that they would find means to compel Buonaparte to appear. I thought these scandalous scenes at an end; but they were repeated every day with greater violence. There was a succession of surprises, of menaces, of vociferations, of letters filled with outrages. The servants threw these placards into the fire, but the exasperation was at its height, a catastrophe might take place every moment: never had I been so exposed. It was the 16th of August (1819): these Saturnalia had continued since the 11th. I gave the Governor to understand that my part was taken, my patience exhausted, that the first of his emissaries who should pass the threshold of my door would be laid dead at my feet. He took me at my word, and gave over his attempts. It is the worst trait of the barbarity of the English government to have selected such a man; but iniquity finds out and makes itself known. An administration has only to meditate a crime, and it soon discovers a miscreant to second and carry it into effect. I abdicated freely and voluntarily in favour of my son and of the Constitution. I came to England still more willingly, because I wished to live there retired and under the protection of its laws. Its laws! Does an aristocracy know any? Is there a crime which deters it: a right which it does not trample under foot? All its leaders were prostrated before my eagles. Out of one part of my conquests I made crowns for some; I replaced others on the thrones which victory had shattered: I have shown clemency, magnanimity towards all. All have abandoned me, betrayed me, and have basely joined to rivet my chains: I am at the mercy of a freebooter.—‘I sought,’ continues Antommarchi, ‘to calm the Emperor. He had not gone out for eighteen months: I pointed out the danger of this long inaction, and urged him no longer to shut himself up in his chamber, but to come and take the fresh air.—“No, no!” was his answer—“Insult has for a long time confined me to these huts: at present the want of strength keeps me here. See if you can discover any thing wrong in

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

this leg : I feel that it gives way under me." I indeed found there was some reason for his apprehension. "You do not press hard enough," he said : "come, say, is nature in intelligence with this *Calabrian*? Is the climate about to surrender to the ministers the corpse which they expect?" I answered, that it was only a passing weakness, which might go off again.'

Antommarchi, having gained his confidence, now became companion as well as physician to the Emperor, and sometimes read with him. He eagerly turned over the newspapers when they arrived, and commented freely on their contents. 'It is amusing,' he would say, 'to see the sage measures resorted to by the Allies to make people forget my tyranny. Poor Europe! What convulsions are preparing for her!' On one occasion, he felt more languid than ordinary, and lighting on the *Andromache* of Racine, he took up the book, began to read, but soon let it drop from his hands. He had come to the famous passage where the mother describes her being allowed to see her son once a day.

'Je passais jusqu'aux lieux où l'on garde mon fils,
Puisqu' une fois le jour, vous souffrez que je voie
Le seul bien qui me reste et d'Hector et de Troie :
J'allais, seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui ;
Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd' hui.'

He was moved, covered his face with his hands, and saying that he was too much affected, desired to be left alone. He grew calmer, fell asleep ; and when he awoke, desired Antommarchi to be called again. He was getting ready to shave, and the Doctor was curious to witness the operation. He was in his shirt, his head uncovered, with two valets at his side, one holding the glass and a towel, the other the rest of the apparatus. The Emperor spread the soap over one side of his face, put down the brush, wiped his hands and mouth, took a razor dipped in hot water, and shaved the right side with singular dexterity. 'Is it done, Noverraz?'—'Yes, Sire.'—'Well, then, face about. Come, villain, quick, stand still.' The light fell on the left side ; which after applying the lather, he shaved in the same manner and with the same dexterity. The expression of his features was mild, affectionate, full of bounty. He drew his hand over his chin. 'Raise the mirror. Am I right?'—'Quite so.'—'Not a hair has escaped me : what say you?'—'No, Sire,' replied the valet-de-chambre. 'No! I think I perceive one. Lift up the glass : place it in a better light. How, rogue! Flattery? You deceive me at St. Helena? On this rock? You too are an accomplice.'—With this he gave them both a box on the ear, laughed, and joked in the most pleasant manner possible. Such was by all accounts the dignity of his grief, the gaiety of his humour,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

whenever he could escape the fangs of the incubus of a bastard Legitimacy!

The Emperor at one time attempted, by the advice of his physician, to work in the garden, and he found some benefit from it; but he got tired of it before long, and Sir Hudson began to grow uneasy 'lest it should be too much for his strength.' Napoleon worked in a large straw-hat; and some Chinese who assisted him having been much amused with his costume, he ordered them to be provided with the same kind of covering. St. Helena was in consternation: all the authorities were called together. This colony of 'straw hats' portended some change, concealed some plot: another 'Birnam-wood had come to Dunsinane.' Napoleon took it in his head to set off in this dress and ride full-gallop towards the extremity of his limits. The alarm was given: the sentinels were in motion. To humour the jest, he equipped the Abbé Vignali (one of the Pope's missionaries who had come out with Antommarchi) in the same manner, and sent him on the same errand. Sir Hudson, who is a classical scholar, thought he saw Buonaparte like Perseus mount his winged horse and take flight through the air. Nothing could exceed the disappointment when he found it was not his man; and he consoled himself with observing, that he who had played him the trick was but an *usurper* after all. Sir Hudson Lowe is a writer of dispatches, not a reader of history; or he would avoid this epithet as one, the meaning of which is not exactly settled in the annals of his country. Buonaparte remarked of him, that his desire to interfere amounted to a disease, an itch that constantly required some object to fasten itself upon. 'He would, if he could, fix the time for me to eat, to sleep, and to rise up, and stand with his watch in his hand to see his orders executed, and wonder that they were not punctually and thankfully complied with.' It is a national disease—strong will and want of feeling, which makes us incapable of conceiving how any one can oppose what we think right, or object to the vexations we inflict upon them. An Englishman is a bundle of muscles without nerves. The Emperor was however wrong in supposing, as he at one time did, that there was any apprehension of assassination. This would be at once against positive law and natural instinct. We only go as far as extreme obstinacy and extreme infatuation can blind us to the result. But like all obstinate and stupid people, we have strong prejudices which hang by words; and an English government must manage these as well as it can. Lord Castlereagh probably owed his death to the consciousness of having overstepped this line in one or two instances, and of having made the British public look askance at him in consequence. In our most aggravated wrongs, we ask for a dull, round-about pretext for being

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

in the right. We may bruise or hunt a victim to death—it is consonant to our habits and feelings—but poison or the dagger are not among our ways and means of morality and the public good. We get rid of our greatest enemies by chronic, not by acute remedies.

No material change took place in Napoleon's situation or health till towards the end of the year, when he suddenly grew much worse; and a crisis might be foreseen to be gradually but certainly approaching without a total change of circumstances, which fate had not in store for him. He became about this period nearly incapable of the slightest action; his legs swelled; the pains in his side and back were increased; he was troubled with nausea, profuse sweats, loss of appetite, and was subject to frequent faintings. In this state he was often visited by the children of Bertrand, into whose infant sports he entered with all the simplicity of a child, and sometimes kept them to dinner. At other times he amused himself with watching the contrivances of a nest of ants to circumvent his sugar-basin, and with the gambols of some fish in a reservoir in the garden. These last died, and the Emperor lamented that a fatality attended whatever he took an interest in. The news of the death of his sister Eliza also affected him deeply. After a struggle with his feelings, which had nearly overpowered him, he rose, supported himself on Antommarchi's arm; and regarding him stedfastly, said, 'Well, Doctor! you see Eliza has just shown me the way. Death, which seemed to have forgot my family, has begun to strike it: my turn cannot be far off. What think you.'—'Your Majesty is in no danger: you are still reserved for some glorious enterprise.'—'Ah! Doctor, you are young, full of health; but for me, I have neither strength nor activity nor energy; I am no longer Napoleon. You strive in vain to give me hopes, to recal life ready to expire. Your care can do nothing in spite of fate: it is immovable, there is no appeal from its decisions. The next person of our family who will follow Eliza to the tomb is that great Napoleon, who hardly exists, who bends under the yoke, and who still nevertheless keeps Europe in alarm. Behold, my good friend, how I look on my situation! Young as you are, you have a long career to run. As for me, all is over: I repeat it to you, my days will soon close on this miserable rock.'—We returned, says Antommarchi, into his chamber. Napoleon lay down in bed. 'Close my windows,' he said; 'leave me to myself, I will send for you by-and-bye.' He did so in fact; but he was dejected, oppressed; he spoke of his son, of Maria-Louisa; the conversation was painful; I sought to divert it, and to recal subjects less trying to his feelings. 'I understand you,' he said; 'well, be it so; let us forget, if indeed the heart of a father ever could forget!'—

From the beginning of March, 1821, the Emperor kept his room

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and no longer stirred out. His disorder and his weakness increased upon him. On the 4th, he tried twice to get into the carriage, but was obliged to lie down again. He still was able to eat something, but very little and with a worse appetite than ever. The conversation turned upon the Fine Arts. One of the speakers made little account of music, and did not conceal his opinion. 'You are wrong,' said the Emperor; 'it is of all the liberal arts the one which has most influence on the passions; and that which the legislator is bound to encourage most. A well-composed piece of music touches, melts the soul, and produces more effect than a treatise of morality, which convinces the reason, leaves us cold and unmoved, and makes no alteration in the slightest of our habits.' The controversy continued between Napoleon and his physician respecting the taking of the pills, draughts, &c.; but in general, the patient submitted, though with a very ill grace and to very little purpose. The night of the 6th was passed in a restless state: he got a little sleep towards the morning. He was less feeble than he had been for some days. He was standing up, his dress neglected; Antommarchi begged him to pay some attention to his toilette. 'When I was Napoleon,' he replied with a degree of emotion, 'I did so readily and with pleasure: but at present, what concern have I in looking well or ill? Besides, all this costs me more trouble now than it formerly gave me to arrange the plan of a campaign. Nevertheless, let us set about it:' and he accordingly proceeded to shave himself, but at intervals; being obliged to stop several times. He finished at length, and lay down the rest of the morning.

Lady Holland had sent out some books, and a plaster-cast of the head marked with the different organs, according to the system of Gall and Spurzheim. He asked Antommarchi to examine it and give his opinion, and expressed his own as unfavourable to it. He classed the authors with Lavater, Cagliostro, and Mesmer, and said he would never see Gall, though Corvisart had much pressed him to do so. Towards the middle of the month, his spirits became more depressed; a death-like coldness seized the lower extremities. 'Ah! Doctor,' he exclaimed, 'how I suffer! Why did the cannon-balls spare me, only to die in this deplorable manner? I that was so active, so alert, can now scarcely raise my eyelids:—and he closed his eyes. Heroused himself, however, towards the latter part of the day, seated himself on the sofa, and was persuaded with difficulty to take some nourishment. Madame Bertrand came in: he proposed that she should join him in his future rides. 'We will set out early in the morning; we shall enjoy the fresh air, shall gain an appetite, and defeat the influence of the climate. You, the little Hortense, and I are the worst; we must join our efforts and assist one another to snatch his victims from death.'

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

The services of the Abbé Bonavita, who had been sent out from Rome, were no longer wanted : Buonaparte wished him to return, and he embarked on the 17th. Napoleon asking Antommarchi whether he would be well-received when he got back to Rome, and the latter remaining silent, he said, ' At least he ought ; for I don't know what the Church would have done without me.'

The malady of the Emperor became more serious : Antommarchi durst no longer trust entirely to his own opinion. Buonaparte objected to any physician recommended by the Governor ; but at length Dr. Arnott, surgeon to the 20th regiment, was called in. He was introduced into the chamber of the patient, which was darkened, and into which Napoleon did not suffer any light to be brought : examined his pulse and the other symptoms, and was requested to repeat his visit the next day. This happened on the 7th of April. The orderly-officer appointed to ascertain the presence of Napoleon was obliged each day to make his report to the Governor that he had seen him : but the Emperor had kept his bed since the 17th of March, so that it was impossible to execute this part of his commission. Sir Hudson began to imagine all sorts of treason. He came to Longwood with his suite, made the round of the house, saw nothing, got in a passion, and threatened the officer with the most severe punishment, if he did not assure himself of the presence of *General Buonaparte*. The officer was much embarrassed with his situation ; but as the apartment of the Emperor was on the ground-floor, it was contrived by Montholon and Marchand, the valet-de-chambre, that by drawing the curtain at a certain moment, he should peep through, and be able to say positively that he had seen Napoleon. This, however, did not satisfy the Governor, who declared, that if on the 30th of March or the following day, his agent was not admitted to General Buonaparte, he would come with his staff and force an entrance, let the consequences be what they would. Remonstrances were vain, and the threat would probably have been carried into execution, had not the consent of Napoleon to receive the visits of the English surgeon resolved the difficulty, and been accepted by the Governor as a sufficient proof that the prisoner was forthcoming. The satellites of Sir Hudson just at this period recommended the removal of Napoleon into the new and commodious house prepared for him, ' in order,' says Antommarchi, ' that having been killed in a hovel, he might die in a palace.' The Emperor, by the advice of his surgeon, declined this honour.

On the 3rd of April the symptoms of the disorder had become so alarming that Antommarchi informed Bertrand and Montholon that he thought his danger imminent, and that he ought to take steps to put his affairs in order. He was now attacked by fever and by

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

violent thirst, which often interrupted his sleep in the night. On the 14th, Napoleon found himself in better spirits, and talked with Dr. Arnott on the merits of Marlborough, whose *Campaigns* he desired him to present to the 20th regiment, learning that they did not possess a copy in their library : but this Sir Hudson Lowe obstinately refused to consent to. On the 15th, Napoleon's doors were closed to all but Montholon and his servant Marchand, and it appeared that he had been making his will. From this time the disorder took various turns, but still making progress. On the 19th he was better, was free from pain, sat up, and ate a little. He was in good spirits, and wished them to read to him. As General Montholon with the others expressed his satisfaction at this improvement, he smiled gently, and said— ' You deceive yourselves, my friends : I am, it is true, somewhat better ; but I feel no less that my end draws near. When I am dead, you will have the soothing consolation of returning to Europe. One will meet his relations, another his friends ; and as for me, I shall behold my brave companions in arms in the Elysian Fields. Yes,' he went on, raising his voice, ' Kleber, Desaix, Bessieres, Duroc, Ney, Murat, Massena, Berthier, all will come to greet me : they will talk to me of what we have done together. I will recount to them the latest events of my life. On seeing me, they will become once more intoxicated with enthusiasm and glory. We will discourse of our wars with the Scipios, the Hannibals, the Cæsars, and the Fredericks—there will be a satisfaction in that ; unless,' he added, laughing, ' they should be alarmed below to see so many warriors assembled together ! ' Dr. Arnott came in. The Emperor stopped and received him in the most affable manner : he addressed him for some time, and put to him the most judicious questions respecting his disorder. He told him that almost always when he rose up, he experienced a painful sensation, a burning heat in his stomach, which never failed to produce nausea and vomiting ; then, abandoning all at once the natural thread of the conversation, he turned to his present situation, still addressing Dr. Arnott, and assuming a tone more animated and solemn than before : ' It is all over, Doctor ; the blow is struck, I am near the goal, and about to render my body to the earth. Come here, Bertrand : interpret to this gentleman what you are about to hear : it is a tissue of outrages worthy of the hand whence they proceed ; explain every thing, do not omit a single word. I had come to seat myself on the hearths of the British people : what I demanded was a loyal hospitality ; and contrary to all that there is of right on the earth, they answered me with chains. I should have found a different reception from Alexander : the Emperor Francis would have treated me with respect : even the King of Prussia would have been more generous. But it was

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

left to England to delude and urge on the kings, and to exhibit to the world the unheard-of spectacle of four great powers glutting their vengeance on a single man. It is your Ministers who have chosen this hideous rock, where the lives of Europeans do not last above three years, to terminate mine by a political murder. And how have you treated me since I have been banished to this spot? There is not an indignity, a horror with which you have not made it your pastime to overwhelm me. The most simple family-communications, those which are not denied to any one, you have refused me. You have not allowed any news, any letter to reach me from Europe: my wife, even my son, have no longer existed to me: you have kept me six years in the tortures of a secret confinement. In this inhospitable isle, you have allotted me as an abode the very spot the least fit to be inhabited, that in which the murderous climate of the tropic is most sensibly felt. I have been obliged to immure myself between four partition-walls, in an unwholesome air, I who have been accustomed to gallop over Europe on horseback! You have assassinated me slowly, step by step, with premeditation, and the infamous Sir Hudson has been the executioner of the base orders of your Ministers.' The Emperor proceeded for some time with the same warmth, and concluded in these words:—'You will end like the proud republic of Venice, and I, expiring on this detestable rock, torn from my family and deprived of all, bequeath the infamy and odium of my death to the reigning family of England.'

On the 21st the Emperor, though he had not slept much, was somewhat better than the day before. Towards four o'clock he took some food which remained on his stomach; and at break of day he had sufficient strength to rise and pass three hours in writing and dictating. This exertion at first was followed by no inconvenience; but towards nine o'clock the vomiting began. He was ill the rest of the day. About one o'clock, he called for Vignali—'Do you know, Abbé, what belongs to a dying chamber?'—'Yes, Sire.'—'Have you ever prepared one?'—'None.'—'Well then, you shall prepare mine.' He then entered into the most minute details on this point, and gave the priest particular instructions. The expression of his face was earnest, convulsive: he saw Antommarchi watching the contractions which it underwent, when his eye caught some indication that displeased him. 'You are above these weaknesses: but what do you wish? I am neither philosopher nor physician. I believe in God: I am of the religion of my fathers: every one cannot be an atheist who pleases.' Then turning to the priest—'I was born in the Catholic religion. I wish to fulfil the duties which it imposes, and to receive the succour which it administers. You will say mass every day in the adjoining chapel,

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

and you will expose the Holy Sacrament for forty hours. After I am dead, you will fix your altar at my head, in the funeral chamber : you will continue to celebrate mass, and perform all the customary ceremonies ; you will not cease till I am laid in the ground.' The Abbé withdrew ; Napoleon reproved his fellow-countryman for his supposed incredulity. ' Can you carry it to this point ? Can you disbelieve in God ? For in fine every thing proclaims his existence ; and, besides, the greatest minds have thought so.'—' But, Sire, I have never called it in question. I was attending to the progress of the fever, your Majesty fancied you saw in my features an expression which they had not.'—' You are a physician, Doctor,' he replied, laughing ; ' these folks,' he added, half to himself, ' are conversant only with matter : they will believe in nothing beyond.'

In the afternoon of the 25th he was better ; but being left alone, a sudden fancy possessed him to eat. He called for fruits, wine, tried a biscuit, then swallowed some Champagne, seized on a bunch of grapes, and burst into a fit of laughter as soon as he saw Antommarchi return. The physician ordered away the dessert and found fault with the *maître d'hôtel* ; but the mischief was done, the fever returned and became violent. The Emperor was now on his death-bed, but he testified concern for every one. He asked Antommarchi if five hundred guineas would satisfy the English physician, and if he himself would like to serve Maria-Louisa in quality of a physician ? ' She is my wife, the first princess in Europe ; and after me, you should serve no one else.' Antommarchi expressed his acknowledgments. The fever continued unabated, with violent thirst and cold in the feet. On the 27th he determined to remove from the small chamber into the saloon. They were preparing to lift him. ' No,' he said, ' not till I am dead ; for the present, it will be sufficient if you support me.'

Between the 27th and 28th the Emperor passed a very bad night ; the fever increased, the cold spread over all his limbs, his strength was quite gone. He spoke a few words of encouragement to Antommarchi ; then in a tone of perfect calmness and composure he delivered to him the following instructions :—' After my death, which cannot be far off, I wish you to open my body : I wish also, nay I require that you will not suffer any English physician to touch me. If, however, you find it indispensable to have some one to assist you, Dr. Arnott is the only one I am willing you should employ. I am desirous further that you take out my heart, that you put it in spirits of wine, and that you carry it to Parma to my dear Maria-Louisa : you will tell her how tenderly I have loved her, that I have never ceased to love her ; and you will report to her all that you have witnessed, all that relates to my situation and my death. I recommend you above all carefully to

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

examine my stomach, to make an exact, detailed report of it, which you will convey to my son.—The vomitings which succeed each other without intermission lead me to suppose that the stomach is the one of my organs which is the most deranged; and I am inclined to believe that it is affected with the disease which conducted my father to the grave, I mean a cancer in the lower stomach. What think you?—His physician hesitating, he continued—‘I have not doubted this since I found the sicknesses become frequent and obstinate. It is nevertheless well worthy of remark, that I have always had a stomach of iron, that I have felt no inconvenience from this organ till latterly, and that whereas my father was fond of high-seasoned dishes and spirituous liquors, I have never been able to make use of them. Be it as it may, I entreat, I charge you to neglect nothing in such an examination, in order that when you see my son you may communicate the result of your observations to him and point out the most suitable remedies. When I am no more, you will repair to Rome; you will find out my mother, my family, you will give them an account of all you have observed relative to my situation, my disorder, and my death on this remote and miserable rock: you will tell them that the great Napoleon expired in a state the most deplorable, wanting every thing, abandoned to himself and his glory.’ It was ten in the forenoon: after this the fever abated, and he fell into a sort of doze.

The Emperor passed a very bad night and could not sleep. He grew light-headed and talked incoherently; still the fever had abated of its violence. Towards morning, the hiccough began to torment him, the fever increased, he became quite delirious. He spoke of his complaint and called upon Baxter (the Governor’s physician) to appear, to come and see the truth of his reports. Then all at once summoning O’Meara, he imagined a dialogue between them throwing a weight of odium on the English policy. The fever having subsided, his hearing became distinct; he grew calm, and entered into some farther conversation on what was to be done after his death. He felt thirst, and drank a large quantity of cold water. ‘If fate should determine that I shall recover, I would raise a monument on the spot where this water gushes out: I would crown the fountain in memory of the comfort which it has afforded me. If I die, and they should not proscribe my remains as they have proscribed my person, I should desire to be buried with my ancestors in the cathedral of Ajaccio in Corsica. But if I am not allowed to repose where I was born, why then let them bury me in the spot where this fine and refreshing water flows.’ This suggestion was afterwards complied with.

He remained nearly in the same state for some days. On the 2nd of May, the fever and lightheadedness came on again. The Emperor

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

in his wanderings spoke of nothing but France, of his son, of his old companions in arms. 'Steingel, Desaix, Massena! Ah! the victory will be gained: hasten, urge the charge: we have them!' On a sudden Napoleon recovered his strength, leaped on the ground, and was bent on going out into the garden. Antommarchi ran to support him in his arms; but his legs gave way under him, he fell backwards: the attendants lifted him up and entreated him to return into bed: but he knew no one, and insisted on going out into the garden. His end evidently approached: those about him redoubled their zeal and attentions, and each was anxious to give a last proof of devotedness. Marchand, St. Denis, and Antommarchi watched by turns at night: but Napoleon not being able to bear a light in the room, they were obliged to render him every assistance which his situation demanded in the midst of the most complete darkness. Anxiety added to the fatigue of his immediate household; but the other French at Longwood, Pieron, Coursot, were eager to relieve them in the sad duty they had to fulfil. The attachment and solicitude which they manifested touched the Emperor: he recommended them to his officers, and wished something to be done for them. 'And my poor Chinese! Let them not be forgotten either: give them a score or two of Napoleons, and bid them farewell for me!' Sir Hudson Lowe took it into his head at this juncture to recommend *new milk* to his prisoner—the worst thing possible!

Napoleon still retained the use of his faculties. On the 3rd he called his executors together and desired them, in case he lost his recollection, to suffer no English physician to approach him but Dr. Arnott. 'I am going to die,' he added: 'you will return to Europe: you have a right to my advice as to the conduct you ought to pursue. You have shared my exile; you will be faithful to my memory: you will do nothing which can injure it. I have sanctioned all the best principles: I have infused them into my laws, into my acts: there is not a single one which I have not consecrated. Unfortunately the circumstances were trying: I was obliged to use force, to delay: reverses came, I could not unbend the bow, and France was deprived of the liberal institutions which I had planned for her. She judges me with lenity, she gives me credit for my intentions, she cherishes my name, the recollection of my victories: imitate her example, be faithful to the opinions which we have defended, to the glory which we acquired: there is nothing without that but shame and confusion.'

The same symptoms continued on the 4th. The Emperor took nothing but a little orange-flower water. The weather was dreadful; the rain fell in torrents, and the wind began to overturn every thing. The willow under which Napoleon had been used to enjoy the fresh

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

air was blown down; and the different plantations of gum-trees were uprooted. On the 5th, after an agitated night, the delirium still continued. He spoke with pain, uttered a few inarticulate and broken words, those of 'the head of the army' were the last that fell from his lips. He had no sooner pronounced them than he lost the use of his speech. It appeared as if the spark of life was extinct; but after a struggle, his pulse beat again, the oppression was diminished, he heaved deep sighs: Napoleon still lived.

It was then that the most painful scene took place of all those which had accompanied his long illness. Madame Bertrand, who in spite of her own sufferings never quitted the bedside of the Emperor, sent for her daughter Hortense and her three boys that they might for the last time behold him who had been their benefactor. They ran to the bed, seized the Emperor's hands and bathed them with their tears; but were so shocked and overpowered at the spectacle before them and at his pale and disfigured face where they had been accustomed to see only an expression of grandeur and goodness, that they were forced to drag them away. This interview made a deep impression on all who witnessed it. Noverraz also, who was confined to his bed, got up and tried to obtain a last sight of his master. No farther change took place for the rest of the day; but in the evening the eyelids became fixed, and the eyes were then drawn back. The pulse stopped, went on. It was within a few minutes of six o'clock. His hour was come: his lips were covered with a slight froth; Napoleon was no more!

The attendants had scarcely recovered from their consternation at the event when two Englishmen glided in among them, approached the body of the Emperor, and having pressed it to ascertain the fact of his death, withdrew as they had entered. He had now been dead for six hours. Antommarchi had the body carefully washed and laid out on another bed: the executors on the other hand had examined two codicils which were to be opened immediately after the Emperor's decease, the one relating to the gratuities which he intended out of his private purse for the different individuals of his household and to the alms which he wished to be distributed among the poor of St. Helena; the other contained his last wish that 'his ashes should repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of that French people whom he had loved so well.' The executors notified this request to the Governor, who treated it with becoming scorn, and said that the remains of Napoleon must remain in the island. They had no resource and fixed on the spot which Napoleon had himself suggested, though he had seen it only once; and which Sir Hudson, having visited it with all his staff, approved. He said his orders were that the body was to remain in the island: it was indifferent to him where. He also offered some

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

plaster of Paris to take a cast of Napoleon's face, and some one to perform the operation. But this was declined, and the plaster procured elsewhere.

The Emperor had intended his hair (which was of a chesnut colour) for presents to the different members of his family ; and it was cut off and kept for this purpose. He had grown considerably thinner in person in the last few months. After his death, the face and body were pale, but without alteration or any thing of a cadaverous appearance. His physiognomy was fine, the eyes fast closed ; and you would have said that the Emperor was not dead, but in a profound sleep. His mouth retained its expression of sweetness, though one side was contracted into a bitter smile. Several scars were seen upon his body. On opening it, it was found that the liver was not affected, but that there was that cancer of the stomach which he had himself suspected, and of which his father and two of his sisters died. This painful examination having been gone through, Antommarchi took out the heart and placed it in a silver vase filled with spirits of wine ; he then made the valet-de-chambre dress the body as he had been accustomed in the Emperor's life-time : with the grand *cordon* of the Legion of Honour across the breast, in the green uniform of a colonel of the chasseurs of the Guard ; decorated with the orders of the Legion of Honour and of the Iron-Crown ; long boots, with little spurs ; finally, his three cornered hat. Thus habited, Napoleon was removed at five hours and three quarters (on the 6th) out of the hall, into which the crowd rushed immediately. The linen which had been employed in the dissection of the body, though stained with blood, was eagerly laid hold of, torn in pieces, and distributed among the bye-standers.

Napoleon lay in state in his little bed-room, which had been converted into a funeral chamber. It was hung with black cloth brought from the town. It was this circumstance which first apprised the inhabitants of his death ; for till then every one had believed in the report of the Governor that 'General Buonaparte was doing well.' The corpse, which had not been embalmed for want of means and which was of an extraordinary whiteness, was placed on one of the camp-beds, surrounded with little white curtains which served for a sarcophagus. The blue cloak which Napoleon had worn at the battle of Marengo covered it. The feet and the hands were free ; the sword on the left side, and a crucifix on the breast. At some distance was the silver vase containing the heart and stomach, which were not allowed to be removed. At the back of the head was an altar, where the priest in his stole and surplice recited the customary prayers. All the individuals of Napoleon's suite, officers and domestics dressed in mourning, remained standing on the left. Dr. Arnott had been

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

charged to see that no attempt was made to convey away the body.

For some hours the crowd had besieged the doors; they were admitted, and beheld the inanimate remains of Napoleon without disorder, and in respectful silence. The officers of the 20th and 66th regiments were admitted first: then the others. The following day (the 7th) the throng was greater; the troops, the inhabitants, even women came, in spite of a ridiculous order to the contrary. Antommarchi was not allowed to take the heart of Napoleon to Europe with him: he deposited that and the stomach in two vases, filled with alcohol and hermetically sealed, in the corners of the coffin in which the corpse was laid. This was a case of tin, lined with a mattress, furnished with a pillow, and covered with white satin. There not being room for the hat to remain on his head, it was placed at his feet, with some eagles, the pieces of French money coined during his reign, a plate engraved with his arms, &c. The coffin was closed, carefully soldered up, and then fixed in another case of mahogany, which was enclosed in a third, made of lead, which last was fastened in a fourth of mahogany, which was sealed up, and fastened with iron-screws. The coffin was exposed in the same place as the body had been, and was covered with the cloak that Napoleon had worn at the battle of Marengo. The funeral was ordered for the morrow; and the troops were to attend in the morning by break of day.

This took place accordingly: the Governor arrived first, the Rear-Admiral soon after; and shortly all the authorities, civil and military, were assembled at Longwood. The day was fine, the people crowded the roads, music resounded from the heights; never spectacle so sad and solemn had been witnessed in these remote regions. At half-past twelve, the grenadiers took hold of the coffin, lifted it with difficulty, and succeeded in removing it into the great walk in the garden, where the hearse awaited them. It was placed in the carriage, covered with a pall of purple velvet and with the cloak which the hero wore at Marengo. The Emperor's household were in mourning. The cavalcade was arranged by order of the Governor in the following manner: The Abbé Vignali in his sacerdotal robes, with young Henry Bertrand at his side, bearing a holy-water sprinkle: Doctors Arnott and Antommarchi; the persons entrusted with the superintendence of the hearse, drawn by four horses, led by grooms, and escorted by twelve grenadiers without arms, on each side: these last were to carry the coffin on their shoulders as soon as the ruggedness of the road prevented the hearse from advancing: young Napoleon Bertrand and Marchand, both on foot and by the side of the hearse; Counts Bertrand and Montholon on horse-back close behind the hearse;

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

a part of the household of the Emperor; Countess Bertrand with her daughter Hortense, in a calash drawn by two horses, led by hand by her domestics, who walked by the side of the precipice; the Emperor's horse led by his equerry Archambaud; the officers of marine on horseback and on foot; the officers of the staff on horseback; the members of the council of the island, in like manner; General Coffin and the Marquis Montchenu on horseback; the Rear-Admiral and the Governor on horseback; the inhabitants of the island.

The train set out in this order from Longwood, passed by the barracks, and was met by the garrison, about two thousand five hundred in number, drawn up on the left of the road as far as *Hut's-Gate*. Groups of musicians placed at different distances added still more by the mournful airs which they played, to the striking solemnity of the occasion. When the train had passed, the troops followed and accompanied it to the burying-place. The dragoons marched first. Then came the 20th regiment of infantry, the marines, the 66th, the volunteers of St. Helena, and lastly the company of royal artillery with fifteen pieces of cannon. Lady Lowe and her daughter were on the road-side at *Hut's-Gate*, in an open carriage drawn by two horses. They were attended by some domestics in mourning, and followed the procession at a distance. The fifteen pieces of artillery were ranged along the road, and the cannoneers were at their posts, ready to fire. Having advanced about a quarter of a mile beyond *Hut's-Gate*, the hearse stopped, the troops halted, and drew up in line of battle by the road-side. The grenadiers then raised the coffin on their shoulders, and bore it thus to the place of interment, by the new route which had been made on purpose on the declivity of the mountain. All the attendants alighted, the ladies descended from their carriages, and the procession followed the corpse without observing any regular order.—Counts Bertrand and Montholon, Marchand and young Napoleon Bertrand carried the four corners of the pall. The coffin was put down on the side of the tomb, which was hung with black. Near were seen the cords and pulleys which were to lower it into the earth. Every thing had a *sombre* aspect, all conspired to increase the melancholy and silent grief of the attendants. The coffin was then uncovered, the Abbé Vignali repeated the usual prayers, and the body was let down into the grave, with the feet to the east. The artillery then fired three salutes in succession of fifteen discharges each. The Admiral's vessel had fired during the march twenty-five cannon-shot from time to time. A huge stone, which was to have been employed in the building of the new house of the Emperor, was made use of to close his grave. This was also strengthened by a stone-wall with a covering of cement. While this was doing, the crowd fell upon the willows, which

DEATH OF THE EMPEROR

the former presence of Napoleon had already rendered objects of veneration. Every one was ambitious to possess a branch or some leaves of these trees, which were henceforth to shadow the tomb of this great man ; and to preserve them as a precious relic of so memorable a scene. The Governor and Admiral endeavoured to prevent this mark of enthusiasm, but in vain. The Governor however, took his revenge by interdicting all access to the tomb, and surrounding it with a barricade, where he placed a guard to keep off all intruders. The tomb of the Emperor is about a league from Longwood. It is of a quadrangular shape, wider at top than at bottom : the depth is about twelve feet. The coffin is fixed on two strong pieces of wood, and is detached in its whole circumference. The French were not allowed to mark the spot with a tomb-stone or with any inscription. The Governor opposed this, as if a tomb-stone or an inscription could tell the world more than they knew already. Sir Hudson Lowe had committed Buonaparte to the ground ; his task was ended ; but he proceeded to ransack his effects with the same rage and jealousy as if he had been still alive, and refused the smallest trifle found among them, and that could be of no use to any one else, to the entreaties of his faithful followers. To make amends, however, he assured them that they should soon be dismissed from the island with every attention ; and he sent them home in a crazy store-ship. Antommarchi, on his return to the Continent, could not procure an interview with Maria-Louisa ; but he saw the Princess Pauline at Rome, and gave his mother an account of all that her son had gone through.

APPENDIX

WILL OF NAPOLEON

NAPOLEON.

This 15th April, 1821, at Longwood, Island of St. Helena. This is my Testament, or act of my last Will.

1.—I die in the Apostolical Roman religion, in the bosom of which I was born, more than fifty years since.

2. It is my wish that my ashes may repose on the banks of the Seine, in the midst of the French people, whom I have loved so well.

3. I have always had reason to be pleased with my dearest wife, Maria-Louisa. I retain for her, to my last moment, the most tender sentiments—I beseech her to watch, in order to preserve my son from the snares which yet environ his infancy.

4. I recommend to my son, never to forget that he was born a French Prince, and never to allow himself to become an instrument in the hands of the triumvirs who oppress the nations of Europe: he ought never to fight against France, or injure her in any manner; he ought to adopt my motto;—‘*Every thing for the French People.*’

5. I die prematurely, assassinated by the English oligarchy and its * * *. The English nation will not be slow in avenging me.

6. The two unfortunate results of the invasions of France, when she had still so many resources, are to be attributed to the treason of Marmont, Augereau, Talleyrand, and La Fayette.

I forgive them—May the posterity of France forgive them as I do!

7. I thank my good and most excellent mother, the Cardinal, my brothers Joseph, Lucien, Jerome, Pauline, Caroline, Julie, Hortense, Catherine, Eugène, for the interest they have continued to feel for me. I pardon Louis for the libel he published in 1820: it is replete with false assertions and falsified documents.

8. I disavow the ‘*Manuscript of St. Helena*,’ and other works, under the title of *Maxims, Sayings, &c.* which persons have been pleased to publish for the last six years. Such are not the rules which have guided my life. I caused the Duc d’Enghien to be arrested and tried, because that step was essential to the safety, interest, and honour of the French people, when the Count d’Artois was maintaining, by his own confession, sixty assassins at Paris. Under similar circumstances, I should act in the same way.

II.—I bequeath to my son the boxes, orders, and other articles; such as my plate, field-bed, saddles, spurs, chapel-plate, books, linen which I have been accustomed to wear and use, according to the list annexed (A). It is my wish that this slight bequest may be dear to him as coming from a father, of whom the whole world will remind him.

2. I bequeath to Lady Holland the antique Cameo which Pope Pius VI. gave me at Tolentino.

3. I bequeath to Count Montholon two millions of francs, as a proof of my satisfaction for the filial attentions he has paid me during six years, and as an indemnity for the losses his residence at St. Helena has occasioned him.

4. I bequeath to Count Bertrand five hundred thousand francs.

WILL OF NAPOLEON

5. I bequeath to Marchand, my first valet-de-chambre, four hundred thousand francs. The services he has rendered me are those of a friend; it is my wish that he should marry the widow, sister, or daughter of an officer of my Old Guard.

6. Item. To St. Denis, one hundred thousand francs.

7. Item. To Novarre (Noverraz), one hundred thousand francs.

8. Item. To Pieron, one hundred thousand francs.

9. Item. To Archambaud, fifty thousand francs.

10. Item. To Cursot, twenty-five thousand francs.

11. Item. To Chandellier, twenty-five thousand francs.

12. To the Abbé Vignali, one hundred thousand francs. It is my wish that he should build his house near the Ponte Novo di Rostino.

13. Item. To Count Las Cases, one hundred thousand francs.

14. Item. To Count Lavalette, one hundred thousand francs.

15. Item. To Larrey, surgeon-in-chief, one hundred thousand francs.—He is the most virtuous man I have known.

16. Item. To General Brayher, one hundred thousand francs.

17. Item. To General Le Fevre Desnouettes, one hundred thousand francs.

18. Item. To General Drouot, one hundred thousand francs.

19. Item. To General Cambrone, one hundred thousand francs.

20. Item. To the children of General Mouton Duvernet, one hundred thousand francs.

21. Item. To the children of the brave Labedoyère, one hundred thousand francs.

22. Item. To the children of General Girard, killed at Ligny, one hundred thousand francs.

23. Item. To the children of General Chartrand, one hundred thousand francs.

24. Item. To the children of the virtuous General Travot, one hundred thousand francs.

25. Item. To General Lallemand, the elder, one hundred thousand francs.

26. Item. To Count Réal, one hundred thousand francs.

27. Item. To Costa de Bastelica, in Corsica, one hundred thousand francs.

28. Item. To General Clausel, one hundred thousand francs.

29. Item. To Baron de Menneval, one hundred thousand francs.

30. Item. To Arnault, the author of Marius, one hundred thousand francs.

31. Item. To Colonel Marbot, one hundred thousand francs.—I recommend him to continue to write in defence of the glory of the French armies, and to confound their calumniators and apostates.

32. Item. To Baron Bignon, one hundred thousand francs.—I recommend him to write the history of French diplomacy from 1792 to 1815.

33. Item. To Poggi di Talavo, one hundred thousand francs.

34. Item. To Surgeon Emmery, one hundred thousand francs.

35. These sums will be raised from the six millions which I deposited on leaving Paris in 1815; and from the interest at the rate of 5 per cent. since July, 1815. The account thereof will be settled with the banker by Counts Montholon and Bertrand, and Marchand.

36. Whatever that deposit may produce beyond the sum of five million six hundred thousand francs, which have been above disposed of, shall be distributed as a gratuity amongst the wounded at the battle of Waterloo, and amongst the officers and soldiers of the battalion of the Isle of Elba, according to a scale to be determined upon by Montholon, Bertrand, Drouot, Cambrone, and the surgeon Larrey.

37. These legacies, in case of death, shall be paid to the widows and children; and in default of such, shall revert to the bulk of my property.

III.—1. My private domain being my property, of which I am not aware that any French law has deprived me, an account of it will be required from the Baron de la Bouillerie, the treasurer, thereof: it ought to amount to more than two hundred

APPENDIX

millions of francs; namely, 1. The portfolio, containing the savings which I made during fourteen years out of my civil list, which savings amounted to more than twelve millions per annum, if my memory be good. 2. The produce of this portfolio. 3. The furniture of my palaces, such as it was in 1814, including the palaces of Rome, Florence, and Turin. All this furniture was purchased with monies accruing from the civil list. 4. The proceeds of my houses in the kingdom of Italy, such as money, plate, jewels, furniture, equipages; the accounts of which will be rendered by Prince Eugene and the steward of the crown, Campagnoni.

NAPOLEON.

(*Second Sheet*).

2. I bequeath my private domain, one half to the surviving officers and soldiers of the French army who have fought since 1792 to 1815, for the glory and the independence of the nation; the distribution to be made in proportion to their appointments upon active service; and one-half to the towns and districts of Alsace, Lorraine, Franche-Comté, Burgundy, the Isle of France, Champagne Forest, Dauphiné, which may have suffered by either of the invasions. There shall be previously set apart from this sum, one million for the town of Brienne, and one million for that of Méry. I appoint Counts Montholon and Bertrand, and Marchand, the executors of my will.

This present will, wholly written with my own hand, is signed and sealed with my own arms.

(L. S.)

NAPOLEON.

LIST (A).

Annexed to my Will.

Longwood, Island of St. Helena,
this 15th April, 1821.

I.—1. The consecrated vessels which have been in use at my chapel at Longwood.

2. I direct Abbé Vignali to preserve them, and to deliver them to my son when he shall reach the age of sixteen years.

II.—1. My arms; that is to say, my sword, that which I wore at Austerlitz, the sabre of Sobiesky, my dagger, my broad-sword, my hanger, my two pair of Versailles pistols.

2. My gold dressing-case, that which I made use of on the morning of Ulm and of Austerlitz, of Jena, of Eylau, of Friedland, of the Island of Lobau, of the Moskwa, of Montmirail. In this point of view it is my wish that it may be precious in the eyes of my son. (It has been deposited with Count Bertrand since 1814.)

3. I charge Count Bertrand with the care of preserving these objects, and of conveying them to my son when he shall attain the age of sixteen years.

III.—1. Three small mahogany boxes, containing, the first, thirty-three snuff-boxes or comfit-boxes; the second, twelve boxes with the Imperial arms, two small eye-glasses, and four boxes found on the table of Louis XVIII. in the Thuilleries, on the 20th of March, 1815; the third, three snuff-boxes, ornamented with silver medals habitually used by the Emperor; and sundry articles for the use of the toilet, according to the list numbered I. II. III.

2. My field-beds, which I used in all my campaigns.

3. My field-telescope.

4. My dressing-case, one of each of my uniforms, a dozen of shirts, and a complete set of each of my dresses, and generally of every thing used in my toilet.

5. My wash-hand-stand.

6. A small clock which is in my bed-chamber at Longwood.

7. My two watches, and the chain of the Empress's hair.

8. I entrust the care of these articles to Marchand, my principal valet-de-chambre, and direct him to convey them to my son when he shall attain the age of sixteen years.

WILL OF NAPOLEON

IV.—1. My cabinet of medals.

2. My plate, and my Sèvres china, which I used at St. Helena. (List B and C.)

3. I request Count Montholon to take care of these articles, and to convey them to my son when he shall attain the age of sixteen years.

V.—1. My three saddles and bridles, my spurs which I used at St. Helena.

2. My fowling-pieces, to the number of five.

3. I charge my *chasseur*, Noverraz, with the care of these articles, and direct him to convey them to my son when he shall attain the age of sixteen years.

VI.—1. Four hundred volumes, selected from those in my library which I have been accustomed to use the most.

2. I direct St. Denis to take care of them, and to convey them to my son when he shall attain the age of sixteen years.

NAPOLEON.

LIST (A).

1. None of the articles which have been used by me shall be sold; the residue shall be divided amongst the executors of my will and my brothers.

2. Marchand shall preserve my hair, and cause a bracelet to be made of it, with a little gold clasp, to be sent to the Empress Maria-Louisa, to my mother, and to each of my brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, the Cardinal; and one of larger size for my son.

3. Marchand will send one pair of my gold shoe-buckles to Prince Joseph.

4. A small pair of gold knee-buckles to Prince Lucien.

5. A gold collar-clasp to Prince Jerome.

LIST (A).

Inventory of my Effects, which Marchand will take care of and convey to my son.

1. My silver dressing-case, that which is on my table, furnished with all its utensils, razors, &c.

2. My alarum-clock: it is the alarum-clock of Frederick II. which I took at Potsdam (in box No. III.).

3. My two watches, with the chain of the Empress's hair, and a chain of my own hair for the other watch: Marchand will get it made at Paris.

4. My two seals (one the seal of France, contained in box No. III.).

5. The small gold clock which is now in my bed-chamber.

6. My wash-stand and its water-jug.

7. My night-tables, those I used in France, and my silver-gilt bidet.

8. My two iron bedsteads, my mattresses, and my coverlets, if they can be preserved.

9. My three silver decanters, which held my eau-de-vie, and which my *chasseurs* carried in the field.

10. My French telescope.

11. My spurs, two pair.

12. Three mahogany boxes, No. I. II. III., containing my snuff-boxes and other articles.

13. A silver-gilt perfuming pan.

Body Linen.

Six shirts.

Six handkerchiefs.

APPENDIX

Six cravats.
 Six napkins.
 Six pair of silk stockings.
 Four black stocks.
 Six pair of under-stockings.
 Two pair of cambric sheets.
 Two pillow-cases.
 Two dressing-gowns.
 Two pair of night-drawers.
 One pair of braces.
 Four pair of white kerseymere breeches and vests.
 Six madras.
 Six flannel waistcoats.
 Four pair of drawers.

Six pair of gaiters.
 One small box filled with my snuff.
 One gold neck-buckle,
 One pair gold knee-buckles, } contained in the little box, No. III.
 One pair gold shoe-buckles, }

Clothes.

One uniform of the Chasseurs.
 One ditto Grenadiers.
 One ditto National Guard.
 Two hats.
 One green-and-grey great coat.
 One blue cloak (that which I had at Marengo).
 One sable green pelisse.
 Two pair of shoes.
 Two pair of boots.
 One pair of slippers.
 Six belts.

NAPOLÉON.

LIST (B).

Inventory of the Effects which I left in the possession of Monsieur the Count de Turenne.

One sabre of Sobiesky. (It is, by mistake, inserted in List (A), that being the sabre which the Emperor wore at Aboukir, and which is in the hands of Count Bertrand).

One Grand Collar of the Legion of Honour.
 One sword of silver-gilt.
 One Consular sword.
 One sword of steel.
 One velvet belt.
 One Collar of the Golden Fleece.
 One small dressing-case of steel.
 One night-lamp of silver.
 One handle of an antique sabre.
 One hat à la Henry IV. and a *toque*.¹ The lace of the Emperor.

¹ A velvet hat, with a flat crown, and brims turned up.

WILL OF NAPOLEON

One small cabinet of medals.

Two Turkey carpets.

Two mantles of crimson velvet, embroidered, with vests, and small-clothes.

I give to my son the sabre of Sobiesky.

Do. the Collar of the Legion of Honour.

Do. the sword silver-gilt.

Do. the Consular sword.

Do. the steel sword.

Do. the collar of the Golden Fleece.

Do. the hat *à la* Henry IV. and the *toque*.

Do. the golden dressing-case for the teeth, which is in the hands of the dentist.

To the Empress Maria-Louisa, my lace.

To Madame, the silver night-lamp.

To the Cardinal, the small steel dressing-case.

To Prince Eugene, the wax-candlestick, silver gilt.

To the Princess Pauline, the small cabinet of medals.

To the Queen of Naples, a small Turkey carpet.

To the Queen Hortense, a small Turkey carpet.

To Prince Jerome, the handle of the antique sabre.

To Prince Joseph, an embroidered mantle, vest, and small-clothes.

To Prince Lucien, an embroidered mantle, vest, and small-clothes.

NAPOLEON.

This 24th of April, 1821, Longwood.

This is my Codicil, or Act of my last Will.

Upon the funds remitted in gold to the Empress Maria-Louisa, my very dear and well-beloved spouse, at Orleans, in 1814, she remains in my debt two millions, of which I dispose by the present Codicil, for the purpose of recompensing my most faithful servants, who moreover I recommend to the protection of my dear Maria-Louisa.

1. I recommend to the Empress to cause the income of thirty thousand francs, which Count Bertrand possessed in the Duchy of Parma, and upon the Mont-Napoleon at Milan, to be restored to him, as well as the arrears due.

2. I make the same recommendation to her with regard to the Duke of Istria, Duroc's daughter, and others of my servants who have continued faithful to me, and who have never ceased to be dear to me : she knows them.

3. Out of the above-mentioned two millions I bequeath three hundred thousand francs to Count Bertrand, of which he will lodge one hundred thousand in the treasurer's chest, to be employed in legacies of conscience, according to my dispositions.

4. I bequeath two hundred thousand francs to Count Montholon, of which he will lodge one hundred thousand in the treasurer's chest, for the same purpose as above-mentioned.

5. Item, two hundred thousand francs to Count Las Cases, of which he will lodge one hundred thousand in the treasurer's chest, for the same purpose as above-mentioned.

6. Item, to Marchand one hundred thousand francs, of which he will place fifty thousand in the treasurer's chest, for the same purpose as above-mentioned.

7. To Jean Jerome Levi, the Mayor of Ajaccio at the commencement of the Revolution, or to his widow, children, or grand-children, one hundred thousand francs.

8. To Duroc's daughter, one hundred thousand francs.

APPENDIX

9. To the Son of Bessières, Duke of Istria, one hundred thousand francs.
10. To General Drouot, one hundred thousand francs.
11. To Count Lavalette, one hundred thousand francs.
12. Item, one hundred thousand francs; that is to say :—
 Twenty-five thousand to Piéron, my maître d'hôtel.
 Twenty-five thousand to Noverraz, my *chasseur*.
 Twenty five thousand to St. Denis, the keeper of my books.
 Twenty-five thousand to Santini, my former door-keeper.
13. Item, one hundred thousand francs; that is to say :—
 Forty thousand to Planat, my orderly officer.
 Twenty thousand to Hébert, lately housekeeper of Rambouillet, and who belonged to my chamber in Egypt.
 Twenty thousand to Lavigné, who was lately keeper of one of my stables, and who was my *piqueur* in Egypt.
 Twenty thousand to Jeanet Dervieux, who was overseer of the stables, and served me in Egypt.
14. Two hundred thousand francs shall be distributed in alms to the inhabitants of Brienne-le-Château, who have suffered most.
15. The three hundred thousand francs remaining shall be distributed to the officers and soldiers of the battalion of my guard at the Island of Elba who may be now alive, or to their widows and children, in proportion to their appointments, and according to an estimate which shall be fixed by my testamentary executors; those who have suffered amputation, or have been severely wounded, shall receive double; the estimate to be fixed by Larrey and Emmery.

This codicil is written entirely with my own hand, signed, and sealed with my arms.
 NAPOLEON.

This 24th April, 1821, Longwood.

This is my Codicil, or Note of my last Will.

Out of the settlement of my civil list of Italy, such as money, jewels, plate, linen, equipages, of which the Viceroy is the depositary, and which belonged to me, I dispose of two millions, which I bequeath to my most faithful servants. I hope that, without availing himself of any reason to the contrary, my son Eugene Napoleon will pay them faithfully. He cannot forget the forty millions which I gave him in Italy, and in the distribution of the inheritance of his mother.

1. Out of these two millions, I bequeath to Count Bertrand three hundred thousand francs, of which he will deposit one hundred thousand in the treasurer's chest, to be applied according to my dispositions in payment of legacies of conscience.
2. To Count Montholon, two hundred thousand francs, of which he will deposit one hundred thousand in the chest, for the same purpose as above-mentioned.
3. To Count Las Cases, two hundred thousand francs, of which he will deposit one hundred thousand in the chest, for the same purpose as above-mentioned.
4. To Marchand, one hundred thousand francs, of which he will deposit fifty thousand in the chest, for the same purpose as above-mentioned.
5. To Count Lavalette, one hundred thousand francs.
6. To General Hogendorf, of Holland, my aide-de-camp, who has retired to the Brazils, one hundred thousand francs.
7. To my aide-de-camp, Corbineau, fifty thousand francs.
8. To my aide-de-camp, General Caffarelli, fifty thousand francs.
9. To my aide-de-camp, Dejean, fifty thousand francs.
10. To Percy, surgeon-in-chief at Waterloo, fifty thousand francs.
11. Fifty thousand francs, that is to say :—

WILL OF NAPOLEON

Ten thousand to Pieron, my *maitre d'hôtel*.

Ten thousand to St. Denis, my head *chasseur*.

Ten thousand to Noverraz.

Ten thousand to Cursot, my clerk of the kitchen.

Ten thousand to Archimbaud, my *piqueur*.

12. To Baron de Menneville, fifty thousand francs.

13. To the Duke d'Istria, son of Bessières, fifty thousand francs.

14. To the daughter of Duroc, fifty thousand francs.

15. To the children of Labedoyère, fifty thousand francs.

16. To the children of Mouton Duvernet, fifty thousand francs.

17. To the children of the brave and virtuous General Travot, fifty thousand francs.

18. To the children of Chartrand, fifty thousand francs.

19. To General Cambrone, fifty thousand francs.

20. To General Lefevre Desnouettes, fifty thousand francs.

21. To be distributed amongst such proscribed persons as wander in foreign countries, whether they be French, Italians, Belgians, Dutch, Spanish, or inhabitants of the departments of the Rhine, under the directions of my executors, and upon their orders, one hundred thousand francs.

22. To be distributed amongst those who suffered amputation, or were severely wounded at Ligny or Waterloo, who may be still living, according to lists drawn up by my executors, to whom shall be added Cambrone, Larrey, Percy, and Emmery. The Guards shall be paid double; those of the Island of Elba, quadruple; two hundred thousand francs.

This Codicil is written entirely with my own hand, signed and sealed with my arms.

NAPOLEON.

This 24th of April, 1821, at Longwood.

This is a third Codicil to my Will of the 15th of April.

1. Amongst the diamonds of the Crown which were delivered up in 1814, there were some to the value of five or six hundred thousand francs, not belonging to it, but which formed part of my private property; repossession shall be obtained of them in order to discharge my legacies.

2. I had in the hands of the banker Torlonia, at Rome, bills of exchange to the amount of two or three hundred thousand francs, the product of my revenues of the Island of Elba since 1815. The Sieur De la Perruse, although no longer my treasurer, and not invested with any character, possessed himself of this sum. He shall be compelled to refund it.

3. I bequeath to the Duke of Istria three hundred thousand francs, of which only one hundred thousand francs shall be reversible to his widow, should the Duke be dead before payment of the legacy. It is my wish, should there be no inconvenience in it, that the Duke may marry Duroc's daughter.

4. I bequeath to the Duchess of Frioul, the daughter of Duroc, two hundred thousand francs: should she be dead before the payment of this legacy, none of it shall be given to the mother.

5. I bequeath to General Rigaud (to him who was proscribed) one hundred thousand francs.

6. I bequeath to Boisnod, the intendant-commissary, one hundred thousand francs.

7. I bequeath to the children of General Letort, who was killed in the campaign of 1815, one hundred thousand francs.

8. These eight hundred thousand francs of legacies shall be considered as inserted at the end of article thirty-six of my testament, which will make the legacies I have disposed of by will amount to the sum of six millions four hundred thousand francs,

APPENDIX

without including the donations I have made by my second codicil.

This is written with my own hand, signed, and sealed with my arms.

(L. S.)

NAPOLEON.

[On the outside is written:]

This is my third codicil to my will, entirely written with my own hand, signed, and sealed with my arms.

To be opened the same day, and immediately after the opening of my will.

NAPOLEON.

This 24th of April, 1821. Longwood.

This is a fourth Codicil to my Testament.

By the dispositions we have heretofore made, we have not fulfilled all our obligations, which has decided us to make this fourth codicil.

1. We bequeath to the son or grandson of Baron Dutheil, lieutenant-general of artillery, and formerly Lord of St. André, who commanded the school of Auxonne before the Revolution, the sum of one hundred thousand francs, as a memento of gratitude for the care which that brave general took of us when we were lieutenant and captain under his orders.

2. Item. To the son or grandson of General Dugommier, who commanded in chief the army of Toulon, the sum of one hundred thousand francs. We, under his orders, directed that siege, and commanded the artillery: it is a testimonial of remembrance for the marks of esteem, affection, and friendship, which that brave and intrepid general gave us.

3. Item. We bequeath one hundred thousand francs to the son or grandson of the deputy of the convention, Gasparin, representative of the people to the army of Toulon, for having protected and sanctioned with his authority the plan we had given, which procured the capture of that city, and which was contrary to that sent by the Committee of Public Safety. Gasparin, by his protection, sheltered us from the persecution and ignorance of the general officers who commanded the army before the arrival of my friend Dugommier.

4. Item. We bequeath one hundred thousand francs to the widow, son, or grandson of our aide-de-camp, Muiron, killed at our side at Arcola, covering us with his body.

5. Item. Ten thousand francs to the Subaltern officer, Cantillon, who has undergone a trial upon the charge of having endeavoured to assassinate Lord Wellington, of which he was pronounced innocent. Cantillon had as much right to assassinate that *oligarchist*, as the latter had to send me to perish upon the rock of St. Helena.¹ Wellington, who proposed this outrage, attempted to justify it by pleading the interest of Great Britain. Cantillon, if he had really assassinated that lord, would have pleaded the same excuse, and been justified by the same motive—the interest of France—to get rid of this general, who, moreover, by violating the capitulation of Paris, had rendered himself responsible for the blood of the martyrs Ney, Labedoyère, &c.; and for the crime of having pillaged the Museums, contrary to the text of the treaties.

6. These four hundred thousand francs shall be added to the six millions four hundred thousand of which we have disposed, and will make our legacies amount to six millions eight hundred thousand francs; these four hundred and ten thousand are to be considered as forming part of our testament. Article 36, and to follow in every respect the same course as the other legacies.

7. The nine thousand pounds sterling which we gave to Count and Countess

¹ There is no act of Buonaparte's life which shews more courage and spirit than this clause in his Will.

WILL OF NAPOLEON

Montholon, should, if they have been paid, be deducted and carried to the account of the legacies which we have given him by our testament. If they have not been paid, our notes of hand shall be annulled.

8. In consideration of the legacy given by our will to Count Montholon, the pension of twenty thousand francs granted to his wife is annulled. Count Montholon is charged with the payment of it to her.

9. The administration of such an inheritance, until its final liquidation, requiring expences of offices, journeys, missions, consultations, and law-suits, we expect that our testamentary executors shall retain three per cent. upon all the legacies, as well upon the six million eight hundred thousand francs, as upon the sums contained in the codicils, and upon the two hundred millions of francs of the private domains.

10. The amount of the sums thus retained shall be deposited in the hands of a treasurer, and disbursed by drafts from our testamentary executors.

11. Should the sums arising from the aforesaid deductions not be sufficient to defray the expences, provision shall be made to that effect at the expence of the three testamentary executors and the treasurer, each in proportion to the legacy which we have bequeathed to them in our will and codicils.

12. Should the sums arising from the before mentioned subtractions be more than necessary, the surplus shall be divided amongst our three testamentary executors and the treasurer, in the proportion of their respective legacies.

13. We nominate Count Las Cases, and in default of him his son, and in default of the latter, General Druot, to be treasurer.

This present codicil is entirely written with our hand, signed, and sealed with our arms.

NAPOLEON.

THE END.

NOTES

NOTES

PAGE

7. 'Her band my playfellow.' Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, III. i. 125.
12. Note. *M. Savary states*. In his (Duc de Rovigo's) *Mémoires historiques et militaires sur la révolution, le consulat et l'empire* (4 vols., London, 1828).
14. *Let a country be so situated, etc.* This remarkable opening sentence of just under seven hundred words, is, I fancy, Hazlitt's most sustained performance of the kind.
16. *One country and one man*. England, of course, and George III., presumably. Cf. vol. XIV., pp. 199-201.
19. 'Drawn from [to] the dregs of a democracy.' Dryden, *Absalom and Achitophel*, 227.
21. *On the 9th of May, 1812*. The narrative here begins to follow Ségur. See *post*, note to p. 82.
22. *Rodolph of Hapsburg*. Rudolph I. (1218-91), founder of the Hapsburgs, elected German King in 1273.
29. *Cut the Gordian knot of policy*. Unacknowledged from *Henry V.* I. i. 45-46.
37. *The trite satire*. First printed, apparently, in *Pigges Corantoe, or Newes from the North* (London, 1642).
The 'sweepings' of his mind. Cf. 'The dregs and squeezings of the brain,' Pope, *Essay on Criticism*, 744.
38. *In these retrospective pages*. Ségur's, he means. (Book v., Chaps. i and ii.)
52. *Those who wish to accuse Buonaparte*. Ségur is criticised again. Hazlitt is basing himself partly on Gourgaud's *Napoléon et la grande armée en Russie, ou examen critique de l'ouvrage de M. le Comte P. de Ségur*, Paris, 1825. He may also, of course, have had the advice of Stendhal, who was in the campaign. (See introductory note, vol. XIII.)
54. *Portrait of the young king of Rome painted by Gerard*. François, Baron Gérard (1770-1837).
59. *The answer to all these hypercriticisms*. See *ante*, note to p. 52.
'Crust of regality.' 'Crust of formality' is Milton's (*Of Reformation in England*, Book I.)
64. *Romanoffs and Rurics*. The 'Rurik dynasty' is sometimes so named after the semi-legendary prince of Novgorod who founded the Russian Empire.
70. *Canonized by the French historians*. See Ségur, Book VIII., Chap. ii.
It is no wonder Mr. Canning exclaimed. Cf. Hazlitt's 'Character of Mr. Canning.'
73. 'Sacred rage.' 'Here noble Surrey felt the sacred rage.' Pope, *Windsor Forest*, 291.
'Mild as kings on their second coronation-day.' 'And kind as Kings upon their Coronation-day.' Dryden, *Hind and the Panther*, l. 271.
82. *Sir Robert Wilson*. Now British commissioner with the Russian army. His *Narrative of events during the Invasion of Russia by Napoleon Buonaparte* was published by his nephew in 1860.
Note. *The accounts in Segur*. Comte P. P. de Ségur's *Histoire de Napoléon et de la grande armée pendant l'année 1812* was published in two volumes in Paris in 1824, and translated into English (2 vols.) in 1825. Hazlitt's reference is to the French edition, which he is using throughout.

NOTES

PAGE

83. *Make mad the survivors, and set free the world.* Cf. 'Make mad the guilty and appal the free,' *Hamlet*, II. 2. 598.
86. 'The rightest company,' etc. Donne, Elegie, 'On his Mistress.'
87. 'The pillar'd firmament,' etc. Comus, 598-99.
The Abbé de Pradt. The Abbé de Pradt's *Histoire de l'ambassade dans le grand duché de Varsovie en 1812* was published in Paris in 1815, and an English translation in London in 1816. Hazlitt's reference is to the French edition.
113. 'From the sublime to the ridiculous,' etc. It has been suggested that Napoleon was quoting Thomas Paine: 'The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again.' *Age of Reason*, Part II., note.
117. *They might have done wisely, etc.* ? An imperfect sentence.
119. *If slavery has rights, etc.* This reiteration of the note of the book will be noted.
121. *Gyges' ring.* Plato, *Republic*, 359 D.
122. 'The iron rod, the torturing bour.' 'Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour.' Gray, *Hymn to Adversity*, 3.
124. 'Their speech bewrayeth them.' Cf. *St. Matthew*, xxvi. 73.
129. *The celebrated actress Mademoiselle Mars.* For whom see the *Plain Speaker* essay, 'Madame Pasta and Mademoiselle Mars,' and *Notes of a Journey.*
A piece of Fabre d'Eglantine's. P. F. N. Fabre d'Eglantine (1750-94), dramatist and revolutionist.
134. *The old Russian who had his son condemned.* See ante, p. 70.
The parallel which has been drawn. Not by Scott, who, however, makes allusion to it.
139. *Some verses bearing an application.* Voltaire, *La Mort de César*, Act I., Scene i.
142. *Diis aliter visum.* Virgil, *Æneid*, II. 428.
143. *The great, the only question.* The note of the book once more.
145. 'Deep scars which thunder had entrenched.' *Paradise Lost*, I. 601.
148. 'Base foot-ball player.' *Lear*, I. 4. 95.
 'Their cause was hearted.' Cf. *Othello*, I. 3. 373.
151. 'Fighting the souls of fearful adversaries.' Cf. *Richard III.*, I. 1. 11.
152. 'Of giving out reformation to the world.' Cf.

'But 'tis the talent of our English nation
 Still to be plotting some new reformation.'

Dryden, prologue to N. Lee's *Sophonisba* (1680).

- 'Time-honoured.' Cf. *Richard II.*, I. 1. 1. The compound is also Wordsworthian.
Diary of Thomas Burton, Esq. Member in the Parliaments of Oliver and Richard Cromwell from 1656 to 1657: now first published . . . Ed. John Towill Rutt, 4 vols., 1828. The diary is doubtfully Burton's.
153. 'Coy, reluctant.' Cf. *Paradise Lost*, IV. 310-11.
154. 'Sunshine of the breast.' Gray, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, 44.
Blotting France out of the map of Europe. Cf. Sheridan on Burke (Dec. 8, 1802): 'Look at the map of Europe: there, where a great man (who however was always wrong on this subject) said he looked for France, and found nothing but a chasm.' Again (Aug. 13, 1807): 'France, as Mr. Burke described it, a blank in the map of Europe.' (*Speeches*, 1816, v. 214, 357). For the passage of Burke's thus summarised see *Letters on a Regicidal Peace* (ed. Payne, p. 87).
155. 'At one fell swoop.' *Macbeth*, IV. 3. 219.

NOTES

PAGE

156. 'Who now sat squat,' etc.

'Him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve.'

Paradise Lost, iv. 799-800.

Sixty Years Since. The allusion is, of course, to the last attempt at Stuart restoration and to the sub-title of *Waverley*.

Note. *Speech from the throne*. November 4, 1813.

158. Mr. Burke has said. 'Where the essential public force . . . is in any degree upon a par in a conflict between nations, that State, which is resolved to hazard its existence rather than to abandon its object, must have an infinite advantage over that which is resolved to yield rather than to carry its resistance beyond a certain point. Humanly speaking, that people which bounds its efforts only with its being, must give the law to that nation which will not push its opposition beyond its convenience.' (*Letters on a Regicide Peace*, ed. Payne, p. 13.)

160. 'Nothing was sacred then but perfidy.' Unidentified.

161. 'Was left for him to bustle in.' Cf. *Richard III.*, i. 1. 152.

163. 'Ob! and was all forgot?' Cf. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 2. 201.
'To stir a flame of sacred vehemence.'

. . . 'Would kindle my rapt spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence.'

Comus, 795-96.

'Change one's humanity with a baboon.' Cf. *Otello*, i. 2. 318.

'Mow and jabber.' Cf. 'Like apes that mow and chatter,' *Tempest*, II. 2. 9.

164. Note. *Baron Fain's Account*. Baron A. J. Fain's *Manuscrit de 1814* was published in Paris in 1823, and an English translation in London in the same year.

171. 'For a nation to be free,' etc. 'Non, crois-moi, l'homme est libre au moment qu'il veut l'être.' Voltaire, *Brutus*, Act II, Scene i.

172. *Second 1st and 2nd of September*. See vol. XIII., pp. 118-19, for Sept. 1 and 2, 1792.
'Screw their courage to the sticking-place.' *Macbeth*, i. 7. 60.

178. *There needed no ghost to tell him that*. Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 5. 125-26.

179. 'The dread strife.' Wordsworth, *Excursion*, vi. 555.

183. 'There is no more to say.' Cf. *King Lear*, III. 1. 51.

185. *Old Percy had a juster notion*. 2 *Henry IV.*, i. 1. 153-60.

189. *It might be too much to say never to return*. Not too much. Hazlitt was writing in 1828-29, at which date Marie Louise was the contentedmorganatic wife of her former lover, Count Neipperg, in her duchy of Parma. She died at Vienna in 1847, fifteen years after the death at the same court of her son and Napoleon's, whose return to the Tuileries, canvassed as it was at the Revolution of 1830, was not intended by Metternich.

France cancel her own ignominy by reversing it. France 'cancelled her own ignominy' by the Revolution of July 1830, which Hazlitt lived to see (cf. his last-written essay, 'Personal Politics') when Charles X. bore the white flag of the Bourbons away with him into perpetual exile.

193. Note. *The action of Mr. Kean*. Cf. *A View of the English Stage* (vol. v., p. 182).

194. 'Kindred' . . . 'kind.' Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 2. 65.

196. Note. *As quoted by Baron Fain*. Montesquieu's *Considérations sur les causes de la Grandeur et de la Décadence des Romains* (1734), Chap. xv.

197. *With one exception, at least*. England, of course.

Note. *Proposed to assassinate him*. The Congress of Vienna, on the news reaching them of Napoleon's landing from Elba, issued their manifesto of

NOTES

PAGE

- March 13, consigning him 'à la vindicte publique.' Wellington explained that they meant public justice, not public vengeance (*Despatches* May 5, 1815). But Lord Liverpool, as Lord Rosebery remarks, rather gives the game away by writing to Castlereagh: 'We wish that the King of France would hang or shoot Buonaparte, as the best termination of the business.' (Yonge, *Life*, ii. 199.)
197. *The same person whose name is connected.* Emmerich Joseph, Duc de Dalberg (1773-1833). He entered the service of Napoleon in 1809, and was created a duke and Councillor of State.
199. *The Abbé de Pradt observes.* In his *Du Congrès de Vienne*, published in two volumes in Paris in 1815, and in an English translation in London in 1816.
200. 'Who was to them Hyperion to a Satyr.' Cf. *Hamlet*, i. 2. 139-40.
202. *Stooping from his 'eyry.'* Cf. *Richard III.*, i. 3. 264.
203. Note. *Montesquieu's Grandeur des Princes.* This title should be as above (note, p. 196).
205. 'On their brow Shame is asbamed to sit.' Cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, iii. 2. 92.
209. 'He that can endure,' etc. *Antony and Cleopatra*, iii. 11. 43-46.
215. *The author here alluded to.* Scott. His account (*Life of Napoleon*, vol. viii., chap. xi.) is presumably 'the one discreditable echo' to which Hazlitt has just referred.
- Conversed with great frankness with Captain Usber and Sir Niel Campbell.* Of whom the former, at least (with his crew), became the customary convert to the Napoleonic charm. His *Narrative*, however, was not published until 1840, and Sir Neil Campbell's until (posthumously) 1869. Hazlitt's apparent inside knowledge, here and a few pages later, is explained by his following Scott, who was provided with some particulars which, he said, 'are amusing, and, so far as we know, have never appeared.' (*Napoleon*, vii. 256.)
216. *He might be said, etc.* Cf. the *Table Talk* essay 'On Great and Little Things' (vol. viii., p. 230); and *ante*, p. 290.
220. 'Heaved pantingly forth.' *Lear*, iv. 3. 28.
- Actresses refused burial.* See vol. xiv., note to p. 168.
222. *Out of the love, etc.* Cf. i *Henry IV.*, ii. 3. 5.
- More nice than wise.* 'Some people are more nice than wise.' Cowper, 'Mutual Forbearance,' 20.
225. 'To the very outrage.' Cf. *Macbeth*, iii. 1. 72.
230. 'Loosened something at his chest.' Cf. Wordsworth, 'Her Eyes Are Wild,' 36.
- Compagnons du Lys.* 'The best wit is always the truest. When the French punsters the other day changed the title of some loyal order from *Compagnons du Lys* into *Compagnons d'Ulysse*, the wit lost none of its efficacy, because there was a lurking suspicion in the mind that the insinuation was true.' 'Mr. Locke a Great Plagiarist' (1816).
- Like unto the first.* Cf. vol. i., p. 234.
232. *To do this a third time.* Cf. *ante*, p. 189. At the Revolution of July 1830, the Wellington Government promptly recognised Louis Philippe.
233. *Old Mortality.* Chap. xxx.
234. *The lovers of liberty the natural victims of the slaves of power.* Cf. the preface; and, as a good example of the homogeneity of all Hazlitt's thinking, see his definition of the character of an orator in the 'Character of Chatham' written in 1806 and printed in *Political Essays*.
- M. Benjamin Constant.* Benjamin Constant de Rebecque's *Mémoires sur les Cent Jours* was published in Paris in 1820.
238. Note. *As he had been on a former occasion.* The Eighteenth of Brumaire (vol. xiv., pp. 62-68).

NOTES

PAGE

240. 'Shook to air,' etc. *Troilus and Cressida*, III. 3. 224.
259. *As little . . . as every one else does at present.* The period of the first Wellington Administration (January 1828 to November 1830).
As long as it shall continue to roll. The extreme pessimism of this conclusion reminds us that Hazlitt did not live, by a year or two, to see the first breakings of the light after 'that night overspread Europe which saw no dawn' (Conclusion, 'Of Persons One would Wish to Have Seen'). Waterloo, of course, is always a symbol rather than a battle to him.
267. 'Saw where an eagle,' etc. *Macbeth*, IV. 4. 13.
 'Strength with strength doth sympathise.' Cf. 'As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathise,' *Troilus and Cressida*, I. 3. 52.
270. Note. *Afterwards shown in London.* And acquired for Madame Tussaud's exhibition, where it was destroyed in the fire of March 18, 1925.
281. *Only two amongst them were favourable.* The *Morning Chronicle*, of course; and probably *The Examiner*. There is a later reference (p. 316, footnote) to the *Edinburgh Review*.
283. *Mr. Capel Lofft.* See his letter to the *Morning Chronicle*, August 3, 1815.
287. *Most of which have been inserted.* Hazlitt used the English edition (Colburn, 8 vols. in 4, 1823). His publisher Cowden Clarke's copy, containing Hazlitt's markings of the passages quoted, is extant.
289. *The campaigns of Italy.* In Gourgaud and Montholon's *Mémoires*. See also p. 294.
290. *And sit down contented, etc.* Cf. *ante*, p. 216 and note.
303. 'Compunctious visitings.' *Macbeth*, I. 5. 46.
304. *The Antigallican*, or Standard of British Loyalty, Religion and Liberty. Twelve monthly numbers were issued in 1804.
307. Note. *A celebrated poet in Cumberland.* Cf. 'Character of the Country People': 'I remember our laughing a good deal at W[ordsworth]'s old Molly, who had never heard of the French Revolution, ten years after it happened.' Hazlitt's visit to Coleridge and Wordsworth in the Lakes, in his twenty-sixth year, was in 1803.
313. *Isabey's portrait.* Jean Baptiste Isabey (1767-1855).
314. 'Disbonour bonourable!' Cf. 'Honour dishonourable,' *Paradise Lost*, IV. 314.
315. *Declaration of the Allies.* August 2, 1815.
Acts of Parliament. On April 11, 1816, the 'Act for more effectually detaining Napoleon Buonaparte' (56 Geo. III., cap. 22) received the royal assent.
316. *There were two protests.* Strictly, there were five—those of the minority voting with Lord Holland (after the negating of his motion for postponement) in favour of his proviso that Napoleon's civil rights should be protected—the Dukes of Sussex and Bedford, and Earls Carnarvon and Lauderdale. The first-named, as a prince of the blood, was naturally a striking adherent. Lord Holland recorded his dissent on the journals of the House.
That fine marble bust. ? Canova's, executed during the Consulate. We do not learn, however, that Hazlitt had seen it.
326. 'Mow and chatter at bim.' *Tempest*, II. 2. 9.
329. *Lord Castlereagh had said.* At Belfast, October 30, 1860.
331. 'The deliverance of mankind.' Southey, *Carmen Triumpnale*.
336. *A nation of shopkeepers.* It is suggested that Napoleon may have adopted this description from Adam Smith: 'To found a great empire for the sole purpose of raising up a people of customers may at first sight appear fit only for a nation of shopkeepers' (*Wealth of Nations*, 1776).
338. *Mr. Soutbey somewhere accounts.* In his *Quarterly* article, 'On Parliamentary Reform,' October 1816.

NOTES

PAGE

343. Note. *His name was Manning.* Thomas Manning (1772-1840), mathematician and Eastern traveller, Lamb's friend and Hazlitt's. At this date he was returning from Peking with Lord Amherst's embassy, of which he was a member. He did not write the account of the travels which his friends, as well as Napoleon, desiderated, but the journal of his remarkable journey to Lhasa (to which he was the first European to penetrate) was edited by Sir Clements Markham in 1876. It is usual to question O'Meara's accuracy, but his account of Manning's experience in France in 1805 is confirmed in every particular by Manning's contemporary *Letters to Lamb* (ed. Anderson, 1925), and to his family.
349. *The famous passage.* Act 1., Scene iv.
350. '*Birnam-wood had come,*' etc. Cf. *Macbeth*, v. 8. 30.
Sir Hudson Lowe is a writer of despatches. As British commissary with the Prussian army, 1813-15.
Lord Castlereagh probably owed his death. Lord Castlereagh (whom Hazlitt, no more than posterity, learns to call Marquis of Londonderry) cut his own throat on August 12, 1822.
352. *Gall and Spurzheim.* Practitioners of the then fashionable cult of phrenology, for whom see Hazlitt's *Plain Speaker* paper, 'On Dr. Spurzheim's Theory.'
364. *The English oligarchy and its . . . 'Et son sicaire.'* (Antommarchi, II. 184).
The asterisks follow Scott—presumably out of consideration for the feelings of Sir Hudson Lowe (d. 1844).
The libel be published. The reference is to his *Documents historiques et réflexions sur le gouvernement de la Hollande*, Paris, 3 vols., 1820.
Manuscript of St. Helena. *Manuscrit venu de Ste. Hélène d'une manière inconnue.* Imprimé à Londres, chez John Murray, 1817.
365. *Arnault.* Antoine-Vincent Arnault (1766-1834), dramatist, whose first play, *Marius à Minturnes* (1791) established his reputation. He remained faithful to Napoleon, and collaborated in 1822 in a *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon.*
Colonel Marbot. Jean Baptiste, Baron de Marbot (1782-1854), commanded a brigade at Waterloo and published *Considérations sur l'art de la guerre* (1820).
372. *Endeavoured to assassinate Lord Wellington.* On February 11, 1818, in Paris. This legacy, with others still outstanding under the will, was paid by Napoleon III. in 1855.

